COMPROMISING POSITIONS

Teleplay by

Michael Norell

REVISED REWRITE DRAFT

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COMPROMISING

POSITIONS

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

WIDE SHOT - LONG ISLAND - A "BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS" SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Sprawling lots. Beautiful quarter-million-dollar homes, illuminated by yard lights. Safe and very comfortable. We're hearing a DINNER PARTY.

BOB'S VOICE
I hate the commute, but we'd never move back to New York.

LARRY'S VOICE
Neither would we. Not in a million years.

BOB'S VOICE
How could you have this in the city? Almost four thousand square feet, an 8-3/4 percent loan, no air pollution, no noise pollution. The kids love it... Judith loves it --

Now CAMERA BEGINS MOVING IN TO HOLD one of the houses. It's a charming Cape Cod split level. It's the SINGERS' house. We hear the VOICES MORE CLEARLY. Bob and Larry FADE INTO the BACKGROUND.

CLAY'S VOICE
Are you selling anything, Nancy? When can we see your name in print again?

NANCY'S VOICE
I just had a piece in Cosmopolitan. Quite possibly not your favorite magazine.

CLAY'S VOICE
Is it like 'Playboy?' Does one one buy it for the fiction?

Nancy laughs.

LARRY'S VOICE
Eight and three-quarters? When did you buy?

BOB'S VOICE
1973.

LARRY'S VOICE
This place has to be worth five times what you paid for it.

BOB'S VOICE
I couldn't buy it today.

INT. THE SINGERS' DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The house is done in a tasteful mixture of antiques and good new designer pieces. In the dining room is a marble Saarinen table and chairs with a Welsh hutch behind it. Five people around the table:

BOB SINGER, in the master's place. Bob's middle-to-late thirties, tall and nice-looking. Great charm. Also a man who's used to getting what he wants when he wants it. He's not obnoxious about it -- he just expects it.

NANCY MILLER is Judith Singer's sharp old college pal. A Georgia peach. Beautiful skin and a clever tongue. Right now she's a trifle drunk.

LARRY MILLER. Tweedy. Smoking a pipe.

CLAY KATZ. Bob's age. Chubby, with a walrus moustache. He's a lawyer and loves to use words.

LISA KATZ. Twenty-four. A knockout.

LISA
(zeroing in on
Nancy)
I read Cosmo all the *time*. What was your article about?

NANCY
It was an interview with Barry Manilow.

LISA
Oh, wow! I *read* it! Did he come on to you? When you met him, I mean?

NANCY
(not batting
an eye)
Not until I undressed him.

LISA
You're *kid*ding!

NANCY
(as if to a child)
Yes, Lisa. I'm kidding.

BOB
(calling)
Judith! We'd all appreciate the dessert and coffee sometime tonight. All right, darling?

INT. THE KITCHEN

The usual dinner party mess. JUDITH SINGER, in silk pants and blouse, a strand of hair down over her forehead, is finishing loading a huge tray with demitasse cups, coffee and accoutrements, dessert dishes, silverwear and a large chocolate mousse. Judith is mid-thirties, good-looking, funny and quick. Just a trifle defensive.

JUDITH

Coming!

BACK IN THE DINING ROOM

Bringing Judith out with the tray. Some AD LIBS on how good the mousse looks. Judith sits at her end of the table and starts passing the coffee and the dessert around the table. More AD LIBS of "thank you" and "just a tiny piece for me," etc.

CLAY

(tasting the mousse)

Judith, it's ambrosia.

JUDITH

Thank you.

BOB

(tasting his)

I don't know. It seems a little bland to me.

JUDITH

(apologetic)

Oh, honey, I'm sorry. I thought I made it the way I always do.

NANCY

(eating hers heartily)

Ignore the ungrateful swine. It's fabulous.

JUDITH

Thanks, Nancy.

Judith goes to pass a dish of mousse to Lisa.

LISA

Oh, no, thank you. Refined sugar is pure poison.

JUDITH

If you say so. How about coffee?

LISA
No, thank you. Caffeine is terrible for your endocrine system.

JUDITH
(a beat)
I could go out and scrape some bark off one of the trees for you.

NANCY
Judith, shame on you. Mary Alice Mahoney told me that sap causes your breasts to collapse.

LISA
Come _on_! You're _kid_ding.

JUDITH
That's something Mary Alice Mahoney couldn't possibly know anything about.

LISA
(not knowing
it's a joke)
Bark is really great for your teeth.

NANCY
I _know_, dearie. But your gums go in a week.

JUDITH
That's not something I want to hear jokes about right now. I have an appointment with my periodontist on Monday and my palms are sweating already.

LARRY
Who do you go to?

JUDITH
My regular dentist is Alan Friedman. He sends me to Bruce Fleckstein whenever the bark starts getting to my gums.

Lisa watching, open-mouthed. It's all over her head.

LARRY
Bruce Fleckstein, the Don Juan dentist of Nassau County?

JUDITH
What?? _I_ never heard that.

LARRY
It's true. He's famous.

JUDITH
I only went to him once before. Six years ago. And he didn't look at me twice. Of course, I was eight months pregnant, so I wasn't exactly September Morn --

BOB
(frowning)
Maybe you ought to go to a different periodontist, honey.

JUDITH
Are you kidding? I've already lived through two-thirds of the anxiety. I'm not gonna waste it.

CLAY
(ruminating)
What did I hear about Bruce Fleckstein? One of the partners in the firm is representing him in an action of some kind.

LARRY
Probably a paternity suit.

CLAY
No, it's not civil. It's criminal.

JUDITH
Criminal! Wow, tell me more!

CLAY
I'm sorry to say I don't know any more.

JUDITH
(grinning)
And here I thought this was just a routine dental appointment. It's getting more intriguing by the minute.

BOB
(with an edge)
Judith, do you think you ought to go up and check on Kate and Joey?

JUDITH
Okay, honey. Nancy, want to come?

NANCY
No, thanks. You see one sleeping kid, you've seen them all.

CLAY
May I come, Judith?

JUDITH
(surprised)
Sure.

She moves off up the stairs. Clay follows.

NANCY
So, Bob. Why don't you just have Judith's feet bound, and get it over with?

UPSTAIRS - CHILDREN'S BEDROOM

Night light. Judith leans over Joey's bed, arranging his covers. She smiles at him, strokes his forehead and kisses him. Clay in the b.g. Judith starts tip-toeing for the door and suddenly Clay has his arms around her.

JUDITH
(startled as hell)
Clay! What are you doing?

CLAY
Run away with me, Judith. I'm miserable with that superannuated cheerleader.

JUDITH
It's a phase, Clay. I believe they call it puberty.

CLAY
That's cruel. She's not _that_ young.

JUDITH
I was talking about _you_. Now let go. Your breathing is straightening my hair.

Clay loosens his grip. Judith isn't angry.

CLAY
I long for the sound of a mature voice. For the press of mature flesh.

JUDITH
Call up one of your ex-wives.

She starts out of the room, stops as Clay speaks.

CLAY

You're unhappy too. I read it in your eyes. You're weary of this drone's life.

JUDITH

You're crazy. I'm perfectly happy. I love my life.

CLAY

Take stock of yourself. I've watched you. Your life is dirty dishes, soiled laundry, fetching and carrying, serving and waiting. As a great philosopher said... is that... all there is -- ?

JUDITH

(sweetly)

Clay... Peggy Lee said that.

INT. THE BATHROOM - JUDITH - NIGHT

She's in her nightgown, using her Waterpik. As she does, and as she talks, she's examining her gums with apprehension.

THE BEDROOM - BOB

INTERCUT WITH Judith. He lies back in bed in pajamas, watching an old MOVIE on the tube.

BOB

(calling)

Sweetheart, will you have time on Monday to pick me up some new socks and underwear?

JUDITH

(having to shout)

Not on Monday. I have my dental appointment at ten, I have Mommy and Me at Joey's kindergarten at 11:30, which I'll probably be late for, then I have to get groceries before the plumber gets here at two, if he ever gets here, and then I have to take Joey to Play Group. Kate gets out of school at 3:30 and --

BOB

Honey, I don't need to hear your whole life story. Can you do it on Tuesday?

JUDITH
Wednesday. Maybe.

Bob shrugs, picks up the channel-switcher and idly switches the channel. It's the NEWS. We hear:

NEWSCASTER'S VOICE
-- the body was discovered late
Friday afternoon by building
maintenance personnel.

ON THE TV SCREEN

We see footage of police and bystanders outside a suburban medical plaza. Ambulance attendants wheel a body past on a gurney. The face is covered. The news camera pans with the gurney.

CUT TO:

NEWSCASTER

He's a cute young guy with a perm.

NEWSCASTER
The police wouldn't speculate on
whether it was murder or suicide.
But one of the maintenance people
told me there was a wound in the
back of Doctor Fleckstein's neck --

Bob sits up, eyes wide.

BOB
Judith! Come here, quick!

NEWSCASTER
-- so murder certainly seems
to be the logical choice.

Judith comes dashing into the room.

JUDITH
What? What?

BOB
Some doctor named Fleckstein
got murdered!

NEWSCASTER
Lieutenant Nelson Sharpe
of the Nassau County Police
is here with me.

JUDITH
What??

Into the picture moves a man of medium height, about forty. NELSON SHARPE.

NEWSCASTER
What's the story here, Lieutenant?

SHARPE
(no time for this)
At the moment, there is no story. We have a dead body, period.

NEWSCASTER
Can we assume murder, sir, since you are in fact, with the homicide division?

SHARPE
You can assume there's a dead body. They sent me because I was a more logical choice than the water commissioner. Excuse me.

He moves off, leaving the Newscaster with egg on his face.

JUDITH

watches this, eyes wide. She loves it.

NEWSCASTER
(with some sarcasm)
More details to come, obviously. All I have from here, despite what the police will or will not say, is that periodontist Bruce Fleckstein is dead at forty-six. This is Milo Hoots, Channel 12 News.

As the Anchorwoman comes back on the screen, Bob clicks the TV OFF.

BOB
A hole in the back of his head, the guy said. Murdered!

JUDITH
I can't believe it!

BOB
What a shocker, huh?

JUDITH
(knocked out)
Yeah. Wow.

CLOSE ON A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE - DAY

Headline says: "PROMINENT DENTIST FOUND SLAIN," hear:

JUDITH'S VOICE
Nancy, if he slept with as many women as you said he did, it could have been any one of a hundred jealous husbands!

PULL BACK. Judith's on the phone, drinking coffee. The dining room table is a mess -- the Sunday papers are all over the place. Judith's wearing jeans and an old plaid shirt of Bob's.

JUDITH
(into the phone)
Was he married?... yeah? Do you think she knew what kind of a guy he was?

THE KITCHEN DOORWAY - THE KIDS

JOEY, a handsome, feisty 5-year-old and KATE, a 7-year-old tintype of her mother.

JUDITH
You know what? Maybe a junkie knocked him off. Or somebody who's been going to him for a year and their gums are still bleeding.
(to the kids)
Hey, hold it, you two.

KATE
Mommy! Mommy!

JOEY
Dumbhead! Chicken doody!

KATE
Joey put his juice in my cereal!

JOEY
I did not!

KATE
You did so!

JUDITH
Knock it off right now, or you can go straight upstairs.
(back into the phone)
Sorry.

KATE
Mommy, can we watch cartoons on TV?

JUDITH
No.

The DOOR BELL RINGS.

JUDITH
(into the phone)
Nancy, I've gotta go. I'll talk to you later.

She hangs up the phone, starts for the door.

KATE
(whining)
Why can't we watch cartoons?

JUDITH
Because they rot your mind. Go outside and play, all right?

DOOR BELL SOUNDS again. The kids go running out. Judith pushes a hand quickly through her messy hair and opens the door.

IN THE DOORWAY - NELSON SHARPE

The cop we saw on TV. He's not much taller than Judith. Prematurely gray hair, large, soft brown eyes. An intelligent face, set with fatigue.

SHARPE
Mrs. Singer?

JUDITH
(trying to place him)
Yes...

SHARPE
I'm Lieutenant Nelson Sharpe, Nassau County Police.

JUDITH
(a sharp intake of breath)
I saw you on TV last night!

SHARPE
(with wry humor)
Everybody did. I'm getting offers for my own comedy series. Could I come in? I'd like to ask you a few questions.

JUDITH
About what?

SHARPE
(a deep sigh)
I'm investigating the death of Marvin Bruce Fleckstein. It's what we were talking about on TV last night.

JUDITH
Right. Come in.

He does. Judith closes the door. She's so excited she's close to hyperventilating.

JUDITH
Why do you want to talk to _me_?

SHARPE
Do you mind if I sit down? I'm dead on my feet.

JUDITH
Sure. You want a cup of coffee? A piece of fruit?

SHARPE
(sinking into a chair)
A piece of fruit would be nice.

Judith runs for the kitchen. Sharpe puts his feet up on the ottoman.

INT. KITCHEN - JUDITH

grabs an apple, a pear, a banana out of the fruit bowl. On second thought, she puts them all back, and just takes the bowl.

JUDITH
(yelling out to Sharpe)
Why do you want to talk to me?

SHARPE (O.S.)
I _don't_ want to talk to you. What I _want_ to do is go home and go to bed. But you happen to be on Dr. Fleckstein's Monday patient agenda.

Judith comes back into the living room with the fruit bowl.

JUDITH
(eyes wide)
Am I a suspect?

SHAPRE
(wearily)
Did you murder him?

JUDITH
No!

SHARPE
Good. You aren't a suspect.
(MORE)

SHARPE (CONT'D)
(taking a pear)
Thank you. Did you happen to notice what time your neighbor, Mrs. Tucchio, came in yesterday afternoon?

Shocked, Judith sits on the ottoman right in front of him.

JUDITH
Marilyn Tucchio?!

SHARPE
That's right.

JUDITH
Why do you want to know?

SHARPE
(a pause)
Did you ever watch 'Dragnet,' Mrs. Singer?

JUDITH
What??

SHARPE
Joe Friday never told people why he was asking questions. Now. Once again. Did you happen to notice --

JUDITH
Is Marilyn Tucchio a suspect?

SHARPE
This isn't a consultation, lady. It's an interrogation. Now. Let me take it from the top.

JUDITH
No.

SHARPE
No, what?

JUDITH
No, sir.

SHARPE
(closing his eyes)
If this goes on much longer, I'm gonna fall asleep in this chair.

JUDITH
(in one breath)
No, I didn't notice what time Marilyn Tucchio came in yesterday afternoon.

SHARPE
Do you happen to know where she does her grocery shopping?

JUDITH
What do you want to hear, that she flies to Boston for canned goods?
(as he just glares)
Sure. All right. Sorry. I don't know where she shops.

SHARPE
Thank you. Now. How often did you go to Dr. Fleckstein for treatment?

JUDITH
I went once, six years ago. And I was going again tomorrow.

SHARPE
When you were treated by him, did he make sexual advances to you?

JUDITH
No.

SHARPE
(surprised)
Really?

Sharpe's gaze meets Judith's. His surprise is obviously genuine and it rattles her a little.

JUDITH
Of course, I'm constantly viewed as a sex object normally --

SHARPE
I wasn't being sarcastic. You're a terrifically attractive woman.

JUDITH
I am?

SHARPE
In my opinion.

JUDITH
(blushing)
Well... when I went to Dr. Fleckstein the first time, I was very pregnant. Gargantuan.

SHARPE
Ah. I see.

JUDITH
Of course, he was more or less famous as the Don Juan dentist of Nassau County.

SHARPE
Really?

JUDITH
Oh, come on. You must know that. Or you wouldn't have asked me if he made sexual advances, right?
(leaning forward)
Do you really think Marilyn Tucchio did it? Because that's the most asinine thing I ever heard.

SHARPE
Well, thanks for your time, Mrs. Singer. And the pear. And the wide range of opinions.
(on his feet now)
Do you mind if I ask you a personal question?

JUDITH
What?

SHARPE
(very casual)
Is there a Mister Singer?

JUDITH
Yes. He's playing golf. Why?

SHARPE
(with regret)
Just curious. Good-bye.

He goes on out the door. Judith looks after him with interest. He's gotten her flustered. She now rushes for the kitchen.

THE BACK YARD

Joey and Kate are messing around. Judith appears.

JUDITH
(blushing)
Well... when I went to Dr. Fleckstein the first time, I was very pregnant. Gargantuan.

SHARPE
Ah. I see.

JUDITH
Of course, he was more or less famous as the Don Juan dentist of Nassau County.

SHARPE
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(on his feet now)
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(with regret)
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THE BACK YARD

Joey and Kate are messing around. Judith appears.

JUDITH

You kids come on in the house. I want you to watch cartoons for awhile. Rot your minds.

THE KIDS

Yaaaaay!

They run for the house.

THE FRONT YARD

A SHOT to bring Judith out the front door. She jogs across the lawn and up the sidewalk of the house next door. She rings the doorbell.

SINGER DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Bob's having his after-dinner coffee. He's still in polo shirt from golf, becoming more and more bored.

JUDITH

Anyway, then I ran right over to Marilyn's and you know what? It turns out she was his last patient yesterday morning! The police were there all last night and this morning questioning her. Do you believe that? Our own next-door neighbor being the last person to see a murder victim alive? Isn't it wild?

(taking a breath at last)

Anyway, Marilyn has an alibi for the time of the murder. She was grocery shopping. She always buys two weeks' worth at a time, so the clerk remembered her, and naturally she kept the receipt -- she keeps everything like that. Do you believe the police? Suspecting her of killing Bruce?

BOB

You call him Bruce now?

JUDITH

Why not? I'm just getting to know him. My theory is -- actually, I have several theories --

BOB

Couldn't we talk about something else?

JUDITH
(hurt)
Sorry if I'm boring you.

BOB
You weren't boring me twenty minutes ago. But you've breached my attention span.

JUDITH
(nose out of joint)
You just don't think I could possibly have an intelligent theory about this murder. Admit it.

BOB
All right. I admit it. Happy?

JUDITH
(sore)
Listen, you know-it-all. I am a person with a college degree! I am a doctorial candidate! I'm as smart as any policeman alive!

BOB
Come off it, Judith. I didn't intend to imply that you weren't smart. I meant you're unequipped to theorize about a murder, that's all.

JUDITH
Phooey. I'm just as equipped as anybody. Maybe my theories are right. Who knows? You don't.

BOB
Honey, let's not argue anymore.

JUDITH
I happen to be on the periphery of this case! And my next-door neighbor is a suspect! Was a suspect. Any minute the phone could ring and somebody could say 'meet me in back of the warehouse and be alone. It's about the murder!'

PHONE RINGS. Judith nearly jumps out of her skin.

BOB
There's your call now.

INT. HALL

Bob goes to the phone. Judith sulks.

BOB
(into the phone)
Hello... sure. Hold on.
(holding receiver
away from him)
It's for you. They want you to
meet them behind the warehouse
and be alone. It's about the
murder.

Judith has to snicker. But she doesn't want to admit the fight's over, so she sticks her tongue out at Bob as she picks up the phone. Bob goes into the kitchen.

JUDITH
(into phone)
Hello.

INT. AN OVER-DECORATED GARDEN ROOM - NIGHT

INTERCUT WITH Judith. On the phone, frowning deeply, is MARY ALICE MAHONEY. She's exactly Judith's and Nancy's age. Very thin.

MARY ALICE
(disturbed)
Judith? It's Mary Alice Mahoney.

JUDITH
(it's been a
long time)
Well, hi. How are you?

MARY ALICE
(a panicked
whisper)
Why did Bob say that? Why did he
say 'it's about the murder'?

JUDITH
Oh, that. My periodontist got
bumped off yesterday and I've had
it on the brain.

MARY ALICE
(voice shaking)
Judith, do you believe that a
coincidence is cosmically inspired?

JUDITH
Why? What coincidence?

MARY ALICE
(a strangled whisper)
I am calling about the murder.

JUDITH
You are?? Did you know Bruce Fleckstein?

MARY ALICE
Yes. In the Biblical sense, if you know what I mean.

Judith's eyes get as wide as saucers.

MARY ALICE
Judith, I've got to talk to you. Tomorrow. Bring Nancy with you and come over. You've got to bring Nancy. I'd call her myself, but I know she doesn't like me. I think she's jealous. Please come? We were always sisters, Judith.

JUDITH
(in a stunned voice)
Well... okay. Sure. How's ten o'clock?

MARY ALICE
Come at ten-thirty. I meditate until ten-twenty. I can't talk anymore. Good-bye.

Mary Alice hangs up, puts her face in her hands, shaking.

CLOSE ON JUDITH

She's overwhelmed, utterly thrilled. Bob comes out of the kitchen with coffee for them both.

BOB
(handing her the coffee)
What'd she want?

JUDITH
(a very sweet smile)
You were right, honey. She wants to see me about the murder.

Bob laughs. Judith laughs.

BOB
(kissing her
lightly)
It's nice that we can joke after
we fight. Friends again?

JUDITH
Sure. You bet.

BOB
Coming to watch 'Star Wars'?

JUDITH
As soon as I clear the table.

Bob goes out. Judith goes into the dining room, grabs some cups and saucers off the table and goes into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

Judith puts the plates down and now:

JUDITH
(with total joy)
Yaaaaaaaaaay!

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

LONG SHOT OF A SOUTH HAMPTON ESTATE - DAY

Right on the Sound. Beautiful grounds, over-gardened. The house is very grand. A couple of Rolls-Royces and a little Jag are parked at the head of the long drive. We hear:

MARY ALICE'S VOICE
The first time I met Bruce -- Doctor Fleckstein -- was at this party.

INT. SUNROOM - WIDE SHOT - DAY

Nancy and Judith are in wicker chairs, surrounded by a jungle of potted greenery. Mary Alice is at their feet, cross-legged on a cushion. She wears something that reveals her total lack of a figure. A stick of incense burns.

MARY ALICE
Are you sure you wouldn't like some rose hips tea?

NANCY
Positive.

MARY ALICE
All right. Well, I knew instantly that there was something between us. Something very deep and very powerful. I was wearing my black Halston. You know my black Halston, Nancy --

NANCY
Mary Alice, honey, I have to leave at eleven-fifteen, even if you're still in the middle of your first soul kiss.

JUDITH
(a glare at Nancy)
Go on, Mary Alice. I'm interested.

MARY ALICE
Thank you, Judith. Well, to make a long story short, Bruce called me, said he'd really enjoyed talking with me. He said 'you know, you really have a lot of substance.'

NANCY
For Pete's sake, Mary Alice --

MARY ALICE
Then he asked if I could meet him for lunch. And I did. At one o'clock at Wong Foo's. But it never occurred to me that anything would happen that day. Oh, my God, he looked handsome. I can't tell you. Beautifully-fitted designer jeans with a Gucci belt --

NANCY
Get to the action.

MARY ALICE
Anyway, we talked for awhile, and then after we'd finished our won ton, he looked me right in the eye and... that was it.

JUDITH
Of course, you can never go back to Wong Foo's...

Nancy giggles. Mary Alice doesn't get it.

MARY ALICE
We went to a motel, Judith. And after that we met every single Tuesday.

JUDITH
Why are you telling us this? What do *you* have to do with the murder?

MARY ALICE
I didn't kill him! I promise! But... well, he took some *pictures* of me.

JUDITH
Pictures??

NANCY
What kind?

MARY ALICE
(starting to snuffle)
Polaroid pictures.

JUDITH
Let's try that again. What were you *doing* in the pictures?

MARY ALICE
(miserable)
I wasn't doing anything! But I was naked and... bound.

NANCY
Bound?? You mean, tied up?

JUDITH
Mary Alice! How could you let anybody do a thing like that to you?!

MARY ALICE
(starting to cry)
Well... he said that these were sacred moments that showed our mutual trust and he wanted to preserve them. He'd gotten this new Polaroid camera for his birthday. He said he'd burn the pictures after he looked at them a few times.

NANCY
Why the hell would he burn them if he wanted to preserve your sacred moments?

MARY ALICE
(wailing)
I don't know! Oh, Judith, I'm so scared! What if somebody finds the pictures? What if the police find them and show them to Keith?

JUDITH
Bad news. Huh.

MARY ALICE
Bad news!? Don't you realize that Keith is under consideration for a Cabinet appointment? We're talking about Washington, D.C.! The President of the United States!

JUDITH
(a little alarmed)
Okay, okay. Calm down, sweetie. We'll think of something. We always thought of something at school, right?

MARY ALICE
I already thought of something.
(MORE)

MARY ALICE (CONT'D)
Nancy, you're a writer. You investigate things.

NANCY
No, I don't. I do articles on personalities, a little pop sociology. That's all.

MARY ALICE
But you used to work for 'Time'! All you have to do is pretend you're a reporter and call up the police and find out what they have! Oh, please, Nancy? Pleeeease?

NANCY
(grumbling)
I'll think about it. Okay?

JUDITH
(a deep breath)
Mary Alice, have you talked to a good lawyer?

MARY ALICE
(recovering instantly)
Oh, Judith, that's why I called you.

JUDITH
(semi-serious)
The story of my life, Nance. She wants you for your talents. Me, she wants because I happen to know a good lawyer.

A LOWER MANHATTAN OFFICE BUILDING - DAY (STOCK)

We hear:

CLAY'S VOICE
I love it. It's the most wonderful thing I've heard in a year. But tell me --

INT. CLAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Way up high. A view. Clay leans back in his chair, feet on the desk, on the phone, enjoying himself.

CLAY
(into the phone)
When someone says 'I have this friend --'

INT. JUDITH'S KITCHEN - DAY

INTERCUT WITH Clay. Judith's in the same clothes, sans shoes. She drinks coffee as she talks to Clay.

JUDITH
Clay! It isn't me! Now come on. Be serious. What should she do?

CLAY
Serious, eh? All right. She should go to the police. With an attorney. But first, she should take a lie detector test.

JUDITH
My friend has another problem. Her husband has more money than God, but he gives her a quarter a week allowance. She can't afford to hire an attorney.

CLAY
Tell her to call me. I'll take the case just to find out who she is.

JUDITH
Would you really?

CLAY
You know, Judith, I have a Nikon. Do you think she'd let me take some picture of her feet? I love feet.

JUDITH
(laughing)
Cute, Clay. I'll ask her. Hey, Clay, thanks. Really. Thanks a lot.

CLAY
Do you get an afternoon paper, by the way?

JUDITH
No. Why?

CLAY
Very big story on the murder.
Filled with innuendo.

JUDITH
Really? What innuendo? Tell me!

CLAY
Hints that your friendly dentist
was acquainted in more than a
passing way with members of a
certain organization we all
thought Eliot Ness had done away
with.

JUDITH
The Mafia??

CLAY
And remember I said someone here
was representing the good doctor
in an action of some kind?

JUDITH
Yes! Yes! What was it?

CLAY
He was about to be indicted by a
Grand Jury.

JUDITH
For what?

CLAY
Tax evasion.

JUDITH
Tax evasion? A Long Island dentist??

CLAY
Mm-hm. The Mafia loves businesses
with unfettered cash flowing through
them. Like... pornography.

JUDITH
Bruce Fleckstein was a Mafia
pornographer?

CLAY
The New York Post said it, I didn't.
Bye-bye, Miss America Pie.

He hangs up.

JUDITH
(into the dead phone)
'Bye.
(sitting, knocked out)
Wow!

INT. THE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bob's working a crossword, getting sleepy. Judith sits cross-legged on her side of the bed, devouring a couple of newspapers.

JUDITH
Listen to this.
(reading)
'Nassau County Medical Examiner James D. Packwood said the cause of death was "penetration of the base of the brain by a narrow instrument."'

BOB
(yawning)
We knew that the first night. Let's go to sleep, okay?

JUDITH
(reading on)
'Packer refused to be specific about the murder weapon. "It could have been an awl, an ice pick or any number of things," he said.' Boy, that's a big help.

BOB
Honey... sleep. And don't forget -- you're coming in and meeting me at Sardi's tomorrow night. Big client's night out, remember?

JUDITH
Right. None of the papers say a thing about the police finding Polaroid pictures of anybody.

BOB
Mary Alice made it all up so you'd think she was a sophistocate. Judith...
(turns off his light)
I'm turning off my light. Why don't you turn off yours?

JUDITH

(still poring)

It says nobody in the family would talk to the press. Can you blame them?

She reaches for the TV remote control.

BOB

What are you doing now?

JUDITH

I want to see if there's anything on the news about the murder.

Bob snatches the remote control away from her.

BOB

You have talked about that dead dentist with the tiny hole in his head ever since I got home. Now if you don't either turn off the light and go to sleep, or go play Sam Spade downstairs, it is your funeral, Judith.

He hurls himself onto the bed and jams his pillow over his head.

CLOSE ON JUDITH

as she gets a fabulous idea. And we hear: SEPULCHRAL ORGAN MUSIC.

EXT. BAUM BROTHERS FUNERAL HOME

A large white brick club with a blue canopy. Judith and Nancy, both wearing black, are walking up the sidewalk with other arriving mourners.

NANCY

I've never been to a Jewish funeral. How am I supposed to act? Should I kvetch?

JUDITH

That's what you do day in and day out. At a funeral, you geshrei.

NANCY

I'll leave the technical stuff to you.

INT. THE FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Black-suited young Baums assist Judith and Nancy as they emerge from an elevator into an ante-room filled with mourners.

NANCY
(poking Judith,
whispering)
There she is. In the flesh. Norma Fleckstein.

A WOMAN ON A LEATHER COUCH

Long, thin legs covered in black, translucent stockings. She wears large, lightly-tinted sunglasses. No tears for NORMA FLECKSTEIN.

NANCY
I call that glamorously bereaved.

JUDITH
Come on.

She drags a startled Nancy over to Norma.

JUDITH
Mrs. Fleckstein, I'm Judith Singer. I was a long-time patient of your late husband and I just want to say --

NORMA
Got your gums all pink and healthy for you, did he?

JUDITH
(blinking)
Absolutely. Never pinker or healthier. I'd just like to say --

NORMA
Thank you, dear. Don't call us. We'll call you.

She looks away. Judith backs up, steps on Nancy's foot.

NANCY
That's my damn _foot_, Judith.

JUDITH
Sorry. _Boy_. Talk about grief --

NANCY
You want to go for double-or-nothing? That's Norma's sister-in-law over there. Brenda Keyes.

A NEW ANGLE - A SLIGHTLY WIZENED BEAUTY

Beautiful black hair in a tight chignon. Petite, bird-legged, buxom and chic. Vulnerable-looking. This is BRENDA KEYES. With her is a pink billy-goat of a man. Totally bald with a gray goatee. This is SKIPPER KEYES.

NANCY
The guy with her is either her husband Skipper or a troll that got in here by mistake. He's Norma's brother.

JUDITH
I know her. I mean, I've seen her. She belongs to my health club. Come on.

NANCY
You go. My foot still hurts.

FOLLOW Judith over to Brenda and Skipper.

JUDITH
(putting out a hand)
Brenda, I'm Judith Singer. We belong to the same health club.

BRENDA
(vaguely)
We do?

JUDITH
I was a devoted patient of the departed and I just want you to know how sorry I am that he's ... departed.

BRENDA
(a little tear)
Thank you. That's real sweet.
(to her husband)
Skipper, honey, this is... ah --

JUDITH
Judith Singer. I just want you to know --

SKIPPER
(barely a glance)
A great guy, my brother-in-law. Taken in the prime of life.

He sees somebody else and moves away. Brenda begins to cry softly. A woman comes up and leads her away. Judith backs up to where Nancy is waiting.

NANCY
Solved the murder yet?

JUDITH
Ha-ha.

A NEW ANGLE - A PLUMP WOMAN

sees Judith and is startled. Her name is FAY JACOBS. She's about fifty. Kind-looking. She moves over a step or two and tugs on Judith's sleeve.

JUDITH
(turning)
Fay!

FAY
What in the world are you doing here?

JUDITH
It's a long story. How are you?
(they hug)
Fay, this is Nancy Miller. Nancy, this is Fay Jacobs. Fay taught me American Lit at NYU Extension.

Cordial how-do-you-do's. Fay moves close to Judith.

FAY
(a whisper)
Tell me the truth. Were you one of Bruce's conquests?

JUDITH
No! Scout's honor. Fay! Were you?

FAY
The answer is no, but thereby hangs a tale. I will tell you, however, that there are at least ten women here today who were.

JUDITH
Fay! Tell me how you know that!

An USHER materializes in the doorway.

USHER
Ladies and gentlemen, would everyone kindly step into the chapel?

FAY

Have coffee with me after.

JUDITH

I can't. I'm meeting Bob in New York tonight and I have to run. I'll call you tomorrow. I've got to talk to you.

With a little wave, Fay moves off into the chapel.

INT. THE FUNERAL CHAPEL

Perhaps a hundred-and-fifty people. A RABBI stands by the coffin. In the front row are Norma, Brenda and Skipper. Next to Norma are three children. As the service goes on, hear occasional sobbing.

RABBI

Norma, little ones, Brenda, Skipper, and dear friends. What can we say about Bruce Fleckstein?

ANGLE ON JUDITH AND NANCY

halfway back. Judith is rubber-necking.

JUDITH

(whispering)

This could be Valentino's funeral.

HER POV - A PAN OF THE ROOM

Here and there are women in veils. Sitting alone. Some are crying.

NANCY

(whispering)

And all of them wondering where their little stack of Polaroids could be.

(as Judith stares)

Well, come on. Why would the guy just take pictures of Mary Alice? And would you turn around? You're embarrassing me.

RABBI

We can, of course, say what a tragedy it is -- a fine man taken from us in the prime of his years. And we can mourn the loss to our community of a dedicated professional --

Someone shushes them.

JUDITH
Nancy, you've got to dig into this case!

NANCY
No! Why can't you just watch 'Dallas' like everybody else?

JUDITH
Dammit, you can't spend the rest of your life avoiding commitments!

NANCY
Oh, take your two-cent sanctimony and get stuffed, Judith!

RABBI
(droning one)
But the loss of Bruce, of Marvin, as his beloved mother adoringly called him, is the loss of the hub of the Fleckstein family, the center of their world. As Yeats so aptly put it, 'the center will not hold.'

Someone else shushes them. Judith glares at Nancy. Nancy glares back. Now she shrugs.

NANCY
(still whispering)
Okay. I'll tell you what I'm gonna do. Remember my 'source' in the police department? Jim Hogan? 'Little Cupcake?'

JUDITH
I thought you said he had a one-track mind.

NANCY
He certainly does. I'll call him. He may not know anything, but it ought to be worth a chuckle or two.

JUDITH
(frowning)
I feel like I'm contributing to the delinquency of a minor or something.

NANCY
That's my problem, Goody-Two-Shoes.

RABBI
(warming up)
We may be deluged with rumors, besieged by innuendo, nearly strangled by the half-truths and smears the media call journalism. But we all know the sort of man Bruce Fleckstein was. We know that Bruce was a fine man, a fine man with a fine family, and the memory of his warmth, his humor, his thousand little kindnesses will be our record of his life, his inheritance.

JUDITH
Well... okay. Thanks.

Someone else shushes them.

RABBI
(winding up)
But what can we say to Bruce's wife, to his three fine children, to his mother, his family, his friends? What can we say?

JUDITH
(sotto voce to Nancy)
You can say that whichever one of them gave him a Polaroid for his birthday made a biiiig mistake.

Nancy snickers out loud. Several angry people turn to stare. She slides down in the pew.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

44TH STREET, MANHATTAN - SARDI'S - NIGHT (STOCK)

To ESTABLISH. Pre-Broadway crowds. We hear:

JUDITH'S VOICE

I was going to tell you. You never gave me a chance.

INT. SARDI'S - NIGHT

CAMERA FINDS Bob and Judith at a table for four. Places for two more are set. Judith looks chagrined. Bob is more put upon and puzzled than angry.

BOB

I don't really care that I had to hear it from Raymond Schlosser, who at least had a reason to be there, since he was Bruce Fleckstein's college roommate. What I care about is that my formerly sane and normal wife is going to the funerals of murder victims! Why?

JUDITH

(lamely)

Well... I never knew anybody who got murdered before.

BOB

Judith, you didn't know Bruce Fleckstein! You went to him once. Six years ago!

(coldly)

Look. If you need another outlet, go back to work on your doctorate, for God's sake. If that doesn't appeal to you, take up knitting. Maybe I'd have some socks then.

(as she sticks her tongue out at him)

I'm glad you think this is funny. Because I don't. You just let the Don Juan dentist of Nassau County rest in peace. Is that clear?

(as Judith gives him a shrug)

All right. Here come Lou and Sylvia.

(MORE)

BOB (CONT'D)
(the chewing out is over)
Mention at least nine times that I'm the best PR man in New York and you get a gold star.

But Judith's sulking. Defiantly.

CLOSE SHOT - ON A SHRIMP COCKTAIL

as it's set in front of Judith.

INT. A FRENCH RESTAURANT - DAY

Judith and Fay Jacobs at a table for two. Judith digs into the shrimp.

FAY
A couple of years ago, Donald and I began socializing with the Flecksteins. Bruce was a charmer, I'll say that much for him --
(taking a sip of wine)
Well, first I found out that he'd had an affair with one of the other wives in our little circle. I know because she told me so. And her husband was a stockbroker who had put Bruce onto some very good investments. Then one day Bruce called me up. He said I was terribly attractive and that I had... real substance.
(Judith reacts to that)
I said 'thank you, and how's your lovely wife Norma?' He took the hint and never approached me again. Now Judith, really. I just know he was saying to himself, 'here's a nice, menopausal woman who would be pathetically grateful for my attention.' Then even Donald became disillusioned with him a year or so ago. Skipper Keyes -- Bruce's brother-in-law? -- came to Donald for a loan to meet his payroll. Skipper's credit rating was very low at the time and he asked Bruce to co-sign the loan.
(MORE)

FAY (CONT'D)
It was no risk to Bruce, but he said no. He refused. Donald felt he did it just to be cruel.

JUDITH
That's very interesting.

FAY
You know, Judith, Don Juan types are always sociopathic and manipulative, but I think it went further with Bruce.
(with deep conviction)
I think he was pure evil. And I'm not the least bit sorry he's dead.

CLOSE ON JUDITH

taking it all in with thrilled fascination.

EXT. A SUBURBAN DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

To ESTABLISH. We hear:

JUDITH'S VOICE
There's a dozen people it could be. A hundred. Any of the women he went to b-e-d with --

THE MEN'S DEPARTMENT - NANCY AND JUDITH

Judith is picking out socks for Bob. She's spelled out "bed" because Joey's with her. Nancy's tagging along.

JUDITH
It could be the husband of any of the women he went to b-e-d- with --

JOEY
Mommy, I'm hungry.

JUDITH
We'll get an ice cream cone in a few minutes, honey.
(back to her subject)
I don't think Skipper would have knocked him off over that bank loan -- not a year later.

They're in front of the underwear. Judith picks out some white boxer shorts.

NANCY
Goof grief, Judith. Even Larry doesn't wear boxer shorts. Get him some of these.

She picks up some bikini shorts in a little plastic cylinder. Joey lies down on the floor.

JUDITH
Bob would never wear bikinis.
(grabbing Joey)
Joey, get up.

Joey yanks his hand away and stands sulking.

NANCY
All I know is, Little Cupcake looks sensational in 'em.

JUDITH
What?? You saw him? Already?

NANCY
I called him this morning. He was panting with lust on my doorstep before I could hang up the phone.

JUDITH
Why didn't you tell me?

NANCY
Why didn't you ask me?

JUDITH
What did he say?

NANCY
(whispering)
He said the fuzz found some of Bruce's pictures.

JUDITH
What?? Where?

NANCY
In the office. Seven or eight of them. They were stuck in the top of a metal equipment drawer. Cupcake says they figure there were lots more of 'em and they only found these because whoever took the rest was in a big hurry.

JUDITH
Were Mary Alice's pictures there?

NANCY
(scathingly)
What was I supposed to do, Judith? Ask him if one of 'em just happened to be a blonde with the body of a tuburcular nine-year-old?

EXT. THE STORE - DAY

Bringing Judith, Nancy and Joey out. Judith has a big shopping bag. Joey's happier now.

JOEY
Can I have an ice cream cone, pleeeeease, Mommy?

JUDITH
Sure, Joey. We'll go get one right now.

NANCY
Cupcake says the cops are considering the possibility that Bruce was blackmailing somebody with the pictures.

JUDITH
Come on. Think about that for two minutes.
(doing Bruce)
'Hi, this is Bruce Fleckstein. I took pictures of your wife doing unmentionable things and I'd like some money. By the way, I'm a rich dentist with a prominent place in the community, so please don't tell anybody I'm blackmailing you.'

NANCY
(a grudging smile)
Think you're smart, don't you?

JUDITH
Boy. They should get me in on this, y'know? I think it's Norma. What do you think?

NANCY
You know what I think? I think if you want to be a detective, go and be a detective. You think all these tacky people are murder suspects, go talk to 'em.

JUDITH
How could I? What excuse could I give?

NANCY
Listen to me, dearie. You are smart, right?

JUDITH
Right. Very.

NANCY
Then you'll think of something.
(sweetly)
Good-bye, Miss Marple.

INT. SINGERS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Judith's in bed, scouring the papers for anything about the murder. Bob comes in, throwing his tie aside and Judith quickly grabs a different section of the paper.

BOB
(an edge)
Reading about the murder, are we?

JUDITH
Dear Abby.

BOBBY
(pleased)
Yeah?

JUDITH
I picked up your socks and underwear today.

BOB
Good. Thank you.

He goes into the bathroom. As soon as he's gone, Judith grabs the front section of the paper again, resumes looking for murder stuff.

BOB (O.S.)
(calling)
I was thinking, honey. About your doctorial dissertation. 'The Effect of the Modern American Novel on Flight to the Suburbs' has been languishing too long. Go back to work on it. You have time to sandwich in a few interviews.

CAMERA'S CLOSE ON Judith for this. The word "interviews" hits home. She sits up, eyes wide.

BOB (O.S.)
(going on)
I think it'd be the greatest thing in the world for you.

He comes out now, wearing his shorts.

BOB
Ready?

JUDITH
(distracted)
Huh? oh, sure, honey.

Bob grins, crawls into bed with her, turns out the light.

EXT. A FANCY SUBURBAN HEALTH CLUB - DAY

To ESTABLISH. We hear: "SWITCHED-ON CLASSICS."

AEROBICS INSTRUCTOR (V.O.)
One, two, three, four, stretch it, stretch it... good, ladies.

INT. THE HEALTH CLUB - DAY

Fifteen or so women going through their moves. The usual outfits. CAMERA FINDS Judith. She's doing her best and it's pretty good. She looks down the row and sees:

BRENDA KEYES

tiny and slim, doing the exercises effortlessly.

AEROBICS INSTRUCTOR
Annnnd... relax. Thank you, ladies. You were all fantastic today.

The MUSIC STOPS. The women all more or less collapse. Judith works her way down to Brenda, who seems hardly to be perspiring.

JUDITH
(panting)
You must be in fabulous condition. I'm panting like a buffalo.

BRENDA
(frowning)
We've met, haven't we?
(brightening)
At the funeral. Oh, sure. I remember. I can't think of your name.

JUDITH
Judith Singer.

BRENDA
You're right. Well, I'm off to the sauna.

JUDITH
Same here. I _love_ a good sauna.

Which we can see from her face she _hates_.

INT. THE SAUNA

Three or four other women in here with Judith and Brenda. All wear strategically-placed towels. Brenda is lying down. A towel is draped over her loins and another one over her breasts. We can plainly see two scars on her abdomen. One is vertical, the other diagonal. _Judith never really looks at them_.

JUDITH
(a little nervously)
Brenda, there's a reason I came up and spoke to you just now.

BRENDA
What's that?

JUDITH
Well, for some time I've been working toward a PhD.

BRENDA
You have? I'm really impressed!

JUDITH
Thank you. My dissertation happens to be on the subject of the First Amendment. I'm calling it 'The Uses and Abuses of Freedom of the Press.'

BRENDA
Boy, tell me about _that_.

JUDITH
I know, I know. That's why I wanted to talk to you. The things you and your family must have been going through? With those terrible, abusive things the papers have printed about your poor brother-in-law -- ?

BRENDA
It's been a real bummer, Judith.

JUDITH
I know, I know. So here's the thing. It'd be a real shot in the arm for my thesis if I could actually interview some of the members of your family, to get their attitudes and their reactions to what the press has done to them.

BRENDA
Gee, I don't know... could we be anonymous?

JUDITH
That goes without saying.

BRENDA
I guess I could ask my husband.

JUDITH
That'd be fabulous. And if you could ask your sister-in-law Norma, too. Of course, I know she must be prostrate with grief --

BRENDA
Huh. Sure, she is.

JUDITH
I know, I know. Let me just add, Brenda, that your cooperation, your views, would become a part of the historical record, a vivid example that scholars and journalists could study in decades to come.

BRENDA
That's just beautiful.

JUDITH
I'll leave my numer for you at the desk. Will you call me?

BRENDA
For sure.

JUDITH
Wonderful. It was really inspiring to talk to you and now I'll say good-bye.

There's a heartfelt handshake and now:

OUTSIDE THE SAUNA

Judith emerges, dripping, gasps in the cool air. Then:

JUDITH
Miss Marple, eat your heart out.

SINGER KITCHEN - EVENING

Judith's getting dinner on the table. She carries in a pot of stew, puts it on the table.

JUDITH
Bob! Soup's on!

Joey and Kate materialize immediately, sit down.

JUDITH
Did you guys wash your hands?

JOEY
Yes, Mommy.

KATE
No, he didn't, Mommy. But _I_ did.

JUDITH
Joey, go wash your hands.

Whining, Joey gets down and goes off. Bob appears. He's about to dish up the stew when the PHONE RINGS.

ANGLE - JUDITH

runs back into the kitchen and picks it up.

JUDITH
(into phone)
Hello.

BRENDA
For sure.

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There's a heartfelt handshake and now:

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ANGLE - JUDITH

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JUDITH
(into phone)
Hello.

INT. KEYES LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

INTERCUT WITH Judith. Brenda Keyes is curled up on the sofa, on the phone. She's eating chocolates and drinking scotch.

BRENDA
Hi. It's Brenda Keyes.

JUDITH
(a little surprised)
Hi.

BRENDA
I talked to Skipper and he said it's okay.

JUDITH
Great! Fantastic!

Bob peers into the kitchen, wondering what's going on. Joey comes back to the table.

BRENDA
The only thing is, he can't do it for a week because he has his annual inventory at the printing plant.

JUDITH
Gee, I'm sorry to hear that.

BRENDA
Unless you can come tonight.

JUDITH
(startled)
Tonight?
(then)
Sure. I can do it tonight. What time?

BRENDA
Eight-thirty. I'll give you the address.

Judith looks into the dining room apprehensively. Bob's starting to get annoyed.

EXT. THE KEYES HOUSE - NIGHT

Fancy home. Judith's station wagon is parked in front. We see inside a two-car garage. One side is a small BMW; on the other side is a yellow Cord with chrome headers. We hear:

JUDITH'S VOICE
What I'm trying to do, Skipper, is explore First Amendment privileges --

INT. KEYES LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

All expensive reproductions. Skipper sits in a Naugahyde recliner that's obviously the Master's Chair. He's very preppy and it doesn't suit him. Brenda looks beautifully-groomed as always, like a doll. She's at one end of the sofa; Judith, at the other end, has a yellow legal pad she's taking notes on. An open attache case is in front of her. She nurses a glass of wine. Brenda works hard on a scotch-on-the-rocks.

JUDITH
(going on)
-- vis-a-vis the individual's right to privacy inherent in Anglo-Saxon common law.

SKIPPER
You sure talk like a PhD. But you look like the Sweetheart of Sigma Chi.

JUDITH
In my case, the Sweetheart of ZBT.

SKIPPER
(chalks one up)
Touche. Hey, brains and looks are a nifty combination. Take notes, Brenda.

Brenda sticks her tongue out at him. Judith takes a deep breath and presses on.

JUDITH
What was your reaction when you saw the first press accounts of the, ah, deceasement --?

SKIPPER
Well, the first couple of things were nothing -- just the usual 'dentist slain' junk.

Brenda gets up and mixes another stiff scotch.

JUDITH
All right.
(MORE)

JUDITH (CONT'D)
Let me get to the articles about your brother-in-law's alleged association with organized crime.

SKIPPER
(vehemently)
Now that was a crock! Bruce was a well-respected dentist and an upstanding businessman.

JUDITH
(trying to be casual)
Oh? Had he been a businessman?

SKIPPER
What dentist isn't?

BRENDA
(a little drunk now)
He brought Skipper some business.

SKIPPER
Brenda, that's hardly germane to what Judy's interested in.

BRENDA
I only wish they hadn't kept calling Norma the former Norma Keyes. Why couldn't they just say Norma Fleckstein? It's like we were mixed up in it. I mean, there wasn't much love lost between Skipper and Norma.

SKIPPER
Why not just let us talk here, Brenda.

BRENDA
(petulantly)
Norma got the lion's share of that inheritance and Skipper got hardly anything at all. And you can bet she never let us forget that.

SKIPPER
Brenda --

BRENDA
And when Bruce sent you that printing business, Norma acted like he was throwing some poor doggie a bone.

Judith is taking all this in eagerly -- can't believe she's hearing all this good dirt. Skipper is furious, but tries not to show it.

SKIPPER
Brenda, will you zip it up!?

BRENDA
Just because you have pornography around, it doesn't mean you sell it or anything. Skipper has some, too. Doesn't your husband?

JUDITH
Oh, sure, Everywhere you look.

SKIPPER
(a cold look at Brenda)
You can put down in your thesis that at least one of the people you interviewed was sober and he says the media are creeps. My brother-in-law was the salt of the earth, and they didn't do a damn thing but drag him through the mud. Bruce was a winner, and nickel-and-dime guys hate a winner.

Judith is furiously taking notes. Brenda smirks.

SKIPPER
(pointedly)
Right, Brenda?

Brenda just lifts her glass in a sullen toast.

CLOSE ON JUDITH'S ALARM CLOCK - MORNING

Seven-fifteen. It SOUNDS. Judith's hand gropes for it, turns it off. PULL BACK as Judith forces herself out of bed, eyes still puffy. She sits a moment to get her bearings, then grabs her bathrobe.

INT. THE BATHROOM

Judith comes in, moves to her own sink, starts to brush her teeth. Bob's shaving. He hums.

BOB
(too chipper)
Good morning!

JUDITH

Hmfr.

BOB

How was the movie?

JUDITH

Fine.

BOB

Whadja see?

JUDITH

(panic)

Uh... 'Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

BOB

Gee, that's still playing around, is it?

JUDITH

(stuck with it)

Nancy hadn't seen it.

Bob just goes back to humming and shaving. Judith looks at him suspiciously, hangs up her tootbrush.

BOB

I let the kids sleep awhile.

JUDITH

Fine.

OUT IN THE BEDROOM

as Judith exits the bathroom, wondering what Bob's up to. He comes into the doorway, still all cheery.

BOB

Larry called last night.

(as Judith freezes)

We're gonna play golf on Sunday. Funny thing. He didn't sound like he was in Mexico.

And he slams the door. Judith knows she's in the soup.

THE KITCHEN

Bringing Judith in. Depressed, she goes to the cupboard, grabs a coffee mug, spoons some instant coffee into it, moves to the sink, fills the cup from the instant boiling water tap and stirs it on the way to the phone. She sits on a stool, dials.

INT. NANCY'S WORKROOM - MORNING

INTERCUT WITH Judith. Nancy's at her typewriter, working concentratedly. PHONE RINGS. She picks it up, puts it aside, goes on typing. We hear from the phone, Judith's voice, a la "The Fly" saying "Nancy? Nancy? Hello?" Nancy finishes a sentence, picks up the phone.

NANCY
(into the phone)
Sorry. I was on a roll.

JUDITH
Nancy, I am a total moron.

NANCY
Now that you've got that off your chest, can I get back to work?

JUDITH
I had a chance to go talk to Brenda and Skipper Keyes last night and I didn't want to tell Bob, so I said you were lonesome because Larry was in Mexico, so I was going to the movies with you.

NANCY
What'd we see?

JUDITH
'Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.'

NANCY
(whooping with laughter)
Where did we manage to find that playing?

JUDITH
Oh, shut up. It was all I could think of this morning. You know what happened? Larry called him. Last night.

NANCY
Lord, you are a moron. Why didn't you call me?

JUDITH
I was too excited. Bob probably thinks I was out having an affair.

Idly, Judith turns around on the stool. As Nancy speaks, Judith's eyes grow wide with shock.

NANCY

If he does, the only thing to do is go out and have one. It's fantastic for your muscle tone.

JUDITH

(a low moan)

Oh, my God...

HER POV - THE BACK DOOR

It's not quite shut. The whole mortise lock, having obviously been ripped out, is on the floor.

CLOSE ON JUDITH

She's ashen, hands and voice shaking.

JUDITH

Nancy... somebody's been in my house...

She looks around the kitchen and now she drops the telephone and screams.

THE REFRIGERATOR

CAMERA ZOOMS IN. There's a large piece of paper bearing the letters:

M.Y.O.B.!!!

It's stuck to the front of the refrigerator with an ice pick!

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. THE SINGER KITCHEN - DAY

A uniformed cop kneels by the door, picking up the door hardware with a pencil and bagging it.

BY THE REFRIGERATOR - LIEUTENANT SHARPE

watches a PLAINCLOTHES COP (FEMALE) extract the ice pick from the refrigerator and put it into a plastic bag. She rolls up the 'MYOB' sign and takes it, too.

FEMALE COP
Got a nice, neat little hole in
your refrigerator, folks. I'd
say death was instantaneous.

She chortles at Sharpe, who smiles at her. He now turns his attention to the Singers.

AT THE KITCHEN COUNTER - JUDITH AND BOB

Judith sits on a stool, looking ashen. Bob, barely able to contain his fury, stands.

SHARPE
A little cop humor. I think
your refrigerator will survive.

BOB
(coldly)
Thank you.

SHARPE
(ignoring this)
So, Mrs. Singer. It's nice to
see you again.

BOB
You seem to be treating this
pretty damned lightly.

SHARPE
Not really. Kojak and I have
different styles, that's all.
Mr. Singer, how about being a
good scout and leaving me alone
with your wife for a few minutes?

BOB
Why?

SHARPE
Well, you do tend to have kind of a powerful presence and I think I could accomplish more if you were out of the room.

BOB
(a little flattered)
Oh. Well, if there's any problem, I'll be right upstairs.

He starts to go, then stops and fixes Sharpe with a long, distrustful look, then finally leaves.

A NEW ANGLE

as Sharpe sits next to Judith, smiles at her.

SHARPE
Your husband the jealous type?

JUDITH
Huh? What does that have to do with anything?

SHARPE
Just wondering. I get the feeling he'd be happier if we had a chaperone.
(quickly)
Y'know... I haven't heard that since high school. MYOB, I mean. 'Mind Your Own Business'?
(a beat)
Would you like to share anything with me, Mrs. Singer? Who wants you to mind your own business? By the way, would you hate it a lot if I called you Judith?

JUDITH
I guess not.

SHARPE
Feel free to call me Nelson. Your husband thinks you've been doing a little detective work. I don't suppose you have a Private Investigator's license?

JUDITH
Sure. Sam Spade, at your service.

SHARPE
You want to tell me what you've been up to?

JUDITH
You don't have to say that like you were talking to some kid.

SHARPE
(on his feet)
Let me try to put this into perspective for you. A couple of weeks ago, somebody entered Bruce Fleckstein's office, and you know what that person did? Forcibly thrust a sharp object into the base of Bruce Fleckstein's skull. Like --
(a brutal stabbing motion)
-- that. It penetrated the medulla oblongata and simultaneously severed the spinal cord. For ten or twelve seconds, Bruce Fleckstein was still alive, probably with his eyes wide open, paralized, and then he died. He died, Judith. He was a human being. And now he isn't alive anymore.

CLOSE ON JUDITH

It's hit home and tears well up. There's a pause. Judith wipes her eyes.

JUDITH
Do I have to tell you all my sources?

SHARPE
Yes. Housewives aren't allowed privileged communications.

JUDITH
Okay. I know about the Polaroids and I know a lot about that weird family.

SHARPE
(an appreciative whistle)
Let's take a walk. If you don't think your husband would come after us with a shotgun --

EXT. THE SINGER HOUSE - LONG SHOT FROM UPSTAIRS

Judith and Sharpe are walking slowly back to the house, starting up the walk. They're talking.

REVERSE ANGLE - BOB

observing them out the window. He looks concerned as hell.

THE FRONT STEPS - SHARPE AND JUDITH

SHARPE
I have to hand it to you, Judith.

JUDITH
(pleased)
Yeah?

SHARPE
Yeah. As a matter of fact, we didn't even know about that bank loan.

JUDITH
Really??

SHARPE
That's right. And now you can get that satisfied look off your face, because here comes the bad news. No more investigating.

JUDITH
Huh? None at all?

SHARPE
None at all. Stay out of it.

JUDITH
What if I don't?

SHARPE
Do you suppose that because I think you're a dish that I'll let you blunder in and ruin my investigation for me? Look. My people will be finished in a few minutes. Get a good dead-bolt lock on that door and do what you were told -- MYOB!

She glares at him for a moment, then stalks into the house.

CLOSE ON SHARPE

as he watches her go. He really likes her.

INT. THE KITCHEN - A LOCKSMITH - DAY

is putting a new mortise and a dead bolt into the door. Judith sits dispiritedly at the kitchen counter. Hear a CAR. After a moment, Bob slips past the locksmith and throws the car keys down on the counter.

BOB
All right. The kids are in school.

JUDITH
They would've been fine on the school bus.

BOB
I'll be the judge of that. Come upstairs, please.

JUDITH
Why? I've known the locksmith for ten minutes. We have no secrets from each other.

BOB
(furiously)
Get upstairs!

Eyes wide, Judith decides she'd better go. Bob follows. The locksmith wants no part of these people.

THE BEDROOM - JUDITH

is on the bed, arms folded, angry. Bob's pacing.

BOB
Tell me where you were last night.

JUDITH
Out with the locksmith. I lied about knowing him for ten minutes.

BOB
That isn't the tiniest bit cute.

JUDITH
I was out talking to Brenda and Skipper Keyes.

BOB
You were what? Why!?

JUDITH
I was... investigating.

There's a silence. Bob has his hand over his face. He simply can't believe what he's hearing. Finally:

JUDITH
Would you be happier if I had been out with the locksmith?

BOB
Has it crossed your mind that because of your 'investigating,' someone came into our house last night while we slept?

JUDITH
Yes, it crossed my mind.

BOB
Not just while you and I slept, but while our children slept. I will not have you putting their lives in danger! Don't you realize the Mafia is involved in this?

JUDITH
I'm not trying to endanger our children! I'm horrified that somebody was in our house! But it was hardly the Mafia. If the Mafia wants to get you, they pull up in a black limousine and machine gun you. They don't put a sign on your refrigerator! That was a prank, Bob. A sophomoric prank!

BOB
Sure! Done by a sophomoric, pranksterish murderer! With an ice pick!

JUDITH
That was our old ice pick.

BOB
I don't care. Judith, listen to me. I am very angry with you. I am ordering you to stay out of this murder. Have I ever ordered you to do anything?

JUDITH
No.

BOB
Well, I'm doing it now. Is it clear to you how serious I am?

JUDITH
(really hangdog)
Yes.

BOB
All right. I'm going to work now. Will you pick up the kids after school, or should I leave work early so I can do it?

JUDITH
(almost inaudible)
I'll do it.

BOB
All right.
(looking at her a moment)
Oh.

He goes to his closet, takes out a tie, which he tosses onto the bed.

BOB
I got some bernaise sauce on this. Take it to the cleaners, will you?

Judith just gestures in a martyred way.

BOB
(very quietly)
Okay. I'll see you.

He goes out.

CLOSE ON JUDITH

as tears well up in her eyes. In a few seconds, she's bawling her little heart out.

THE KITCHEN - DAY

Judith is cleaning out the refrigerator. Snuffling to herself, terminally depressed. As she works, she slams the sponge down, is vicious to the liquid cleaner. The complete martyr. The PHONE RINGS. She picks it up.

JUDITH
(low)
Hello... oh, hello, Brenda.
(dully)
She will? That's nice. Listen, Brenda, I'm not so sure I want to do it right away... no, I have -- all these notes I have to transcribe, so --
(fighting back the tears)
I'll probably take a rain-check for a little while... well, okay. I'll write it down just in case.
(writing)
KL5-3488. Okay. Thanks very much for the call. 'Bye-bye.

She hangs up. Utterly miserable.

BEGIN SHORT MONTAGE

THE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Judith vacuums listlessly.

THE BATHROOM - DAY

Judith is on hands and knees, scrubbing out the toilet. She's making faces, acting out the conversation with Bob.

THE KITCHEN

She's on the phone.

JUDITH
No, we're not interested in solar heating, thank you anyway.

EXT. A SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

Judith pulls up in the station wagon. Other mothers are letting little boys off. Joey gets out of the car and runs inside. Judith pulls away.

INT. THE BEDROOM - DAY

Joan of Arc is now vacuuming quite viciously. The bed is still unmade. She unhooks the vacuum, winds up the cord and turns to the bed.

CLOSE ON BOB'S TIE

as she stares at it.

JUDITH

looking long and hard at the tie. It's a symbol. At last, making up her mind, she makes the bed right over the tie. It makes her feel very good indeed.

THE KITCHEN

as Judith comes tearing in, looks on her scratch pad for the number, and dials.

END THE MONTAGE

INT. FLECKSTEIN LIVING ROOM - DAY

Judith sips coffee with Norma Fleckstein. The room is all greens and whites. The wood furniture is sleek and so is Norma. She's color-coordinated with the room.

JUDITH
Just let me add, Norma, that your cooperation, your views, will become a part of the historical record, an example that journalists and scholars will study in decades to come.

NORMA
Will they enshrine me on Mount Rushmore, too?

JUDITH
Well, you never know --

Judith feels like an ass. Norma's very cool.

NORMA
I'll make this easy for you. The press prints lies. But they don't just invent them. They develop them from information they gather. Do you know what I mean?

JUDITH
Of course. You feel that they took the fact that your late husband was involved in a Grand Jury investigation --

NORMA
And declared him guilty.

JUDITH
Whereas, of course, the notion that your husband was some sort of Mafia pornographer is absurd.

NORMA
Ludicrous.

JUDITH
(leaning forward)
This doesn't have anything to do with my thesis, Norma, but I just have to ask you -- it sounds to me like somebody was out to _get_ Bruce. Do you think so, too?

NORMA
You're right. That doesn't have anything to do with your thesis.

JUDITH
Of course. Excuse me for sticking my two cents in like that.

NORMA
And, of course, somebody _did_ get him, didn't they?

JUDITH
Yes, they did. I'm sorry I brought it up. It was just terrible. Everybody seemed to love your husband so much -- I know I just adored going to him and your brother and sister-in-law seemed terribly broken up when I talked to them.

NORMA
Isn't that sweet. Especially since my darling warthog of a baby brother is the one who was informing on Bruce to the Grand Jury. Put _that_ in your little thesis. On second thought, _don't_.
(standing up)
Do you have enough? Have I been helpful?

EXT. SINGERS' HOUSE - DAY

To bring Judith up the driveway in the station wagon. A no-frills Plymouth is in front of the house, a man slouched behind the wheel. Judith peers at it.

ANGLE ON THE PLYMOUTH - SHARPE

opens the door and gets out. He ambles up the walk, meets Judith on the porch.

SHARPE
Hi.

JUDITH
(not warmly)
Hello.

SHARPE
I happened to be in the area.

JUDITH
Slouched in your car in front of my house? What a coincidence.

SHARPE
You going to ask me inside?

JUDITH
What do you want?

SHARPE
You're not easy, you know that?

JUDITH
You are?
(shrugs)
Eh. Come on in.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - DAY

as Judith comes in, kicks off her shoes. Sharpe follows, watching her with interest.

SHARPE
So tell me. Did you find Norma Fleckstein as hard to talk to as I did?

Judith whirls on him, mouth open in astonishment.

JUDITH
How did you know??

SHARPE
Do you think you're dealing with people who just fell off the turnip truck? I had you followed. Are you hungry? I'm starving, myself.

He starts for the kitchen. Judith just watches him go. He's really starting to get to her.

INT. KITCHEN - CLOSE ON A SIZZLING OMELET

PULL BACK. Sharpe's just doubling it. He knows what he's doing. At the kitchen table in the b.g. Judith digs into her omelet.

SHARPE

Norma was absolutely right. Skipper was going to be the Grand Jury informant against Bruce. Bruce was very deep into the porno trade, so he tossed Skipper some printing business.

JUDITH

Literature or pictures?

SHARPE

Hardly literature. Call it written matter. How's the omelet?

JUDITH

Fabulous. Why did Skipper go to the Grand Jury?

Sharpe has his own omelet on a plate. He joins Judith at the table.

SHARPE

They came to him. Rather, the IRS did. They put some big league pressure on him and he turned state's evidence.

JUDITH

(frowning)

I'm trying to make a connection between Skipper Keyes informing on Bruce and Bruce being killed.

SHARPE

If there is any connection, I haven't found it.

JUDITH

It would've made sense for Bruce to have killed Skipper, but not for Skipper to have killed Bruce.

SHARPE
Skipper isn't high on the suspect list anyway.

JUDITH
I think Norma did it.

SHARPE
Any reason?

JUDITH
No.

SHARPE
Sound thinking. You know, this is real cozy.

JUDITH
What is?

SHARPE
Sitting here together, you and I, eating our omelets. You're an easy person to eat an omelet with.

JUDITH
(flustered)
Are you flirting with me?

SHARPE
Yes.

JUDITH
Oh.

A long pause. Sharpe's enjoying her discomfort. Finally:

SHARPE
I want to ask you a favor.

JUDITH
Yeah? What?

SHARPE
I want you to look at those Polaroids we found in Bruce's office.

JUDITH
You do??

SHARPE
Yeah. We're having a hell of a time getting an ID on any of them. They aren't something I can have my boys show around the neighborhood, after all.

JUDITH
You really want me to look at them?

SHARPE
I'll bring them over tomorrow. Maybe you'll recognize somebody.

JUDITH
Sure. That's great. Of course I'll do it. Boy-oh-boy!

SHARPE
Judith, if you're going to be an honorary detective, never say 'boy-oh-boy' again, as long as you live.

He smiles at her as he takes another bite of his omelet. She's clearly excited -- nearly unnerved.

THE CHILDRENS' ROOM - JUDITH - NIGHT

First she kisses Joey and tucks a blanket around his chin. Then she gives Kate a little stroke on the forehead and a kiss. She goes to the door, gives them a fond look, puts on the night light and closes the door.

INT. THE BEDROOM

Judith comes in. Bob's in his pajamas. He's just about to turn down the bed. Judith catches her breath as he does, remembering --

ON THE BED

as Bob turns back the covers. There's his tie, just where he'd left it.

JUDITH
Gee. How did that get there?

Bob picks up the tie, hefts it once, then smiles.

BOB
I can't blame you, I guess.

JUDITH
(taking the tie)
I'll take it tomorrow. I promise.

Bob puts his arms around her.

BOB
I'll forgive you if you'll forgive me.

JUDITH
Sure.

BOB
I was right, though, wasn't I?

JUDITH
A hundred percent.

BOB
No more playing at being a detective?

JUDITH
Bob... I'll never play at being a detective again.

They hug. We see Judith's face. She hates to lie to him again, but then... it's not really a lie.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

EXT. SINGERS' HOUSE - DAY

TO ESTABLISH. Hear:

NANCY'S VOICE
Lord, a skilled artisan at work is an inspiring sight.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

Judith's putting bleach on some kids' clothes and tossing them into the washer. She wears cut-offs and an old shirt. Nancy sits on a step-stool, looking cool and drinking wine.

JUDITH
How can you drink wine so early in the day?

NANCY
Did you invite me over here just to nag me?

JUDITH
Why else?
(wiping away the sweat)
Boy. It's really gotten complicated. I'm back on the case, Lieutenant Sharpe is going to show me the pictures, and I'm thrilled to death. But I keep promising Bob I'm off the case and if he finds out I'm back on it, he's gonna kill me and, on top of that, I'm neglecting my children. A typical Cosmo career woman, right? And, on top of everything else, I'm terrifically attracted to Nelson.

NANCY
Who the hell is Nelson?

JUDITH
Lieutenant Sharpe.

NANCY
Well, why not? Cops are fun. Try it. You might like it.

JUDITH
I'm not like you, Nancy.
(MORE)

JUDITH (CONT'D)
I can't pretend to love my husband and fool around, too.

NANCY
Whoa. I do love my husband. I just don't pretend that he can satisfy all my needs, that's all.
(as Judith just looks at her)
Hypocracy, she says without saying it. If so, so be it. You take me as you find me or you leave me alone. Enrich your life, or don't enrich your life. Be a drudge or be a free spirit. It's no skin off my nose.

JUDITH
That's what Clay said I was. A drudge.

NANCY
Well... if the shoe fits --

JUDITH
I'm beginning to think it does.

NANCY
You know what the trouble with marriage is, Judith? No matter how much you love your husband, you never, ever get to fall in love again. I'm not willing to give that up. It's too terrific.

JUDITH
I don't think I could deal with it.

NANCY
So who asked you to?

JUDITH
You did. You said, 'Try it, you might like it.'

NANCY
All right, don't try it. You wouldn't like it.

JUDITH
That's my problem. I might.

NANCY
Judith, don't bust my chops, okay?

JUDITH
Sorry.

She starts up the washer, turns to Nancy and takes the wineglass.

JUDITH
Gimme a slug of that.

NANCY
So early in the day?

JUDITH
Oh, shut up.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - DAY

Judith, looking scrubbed -- hair clean and shiny -- puts on lipstick, touching up some subtle eye shadow spots. She's in slacks and a bra.

INT. BEDROOM

Judith dashes in, opens the closet, chooses, then discards two or three blouses, then picks a casual-looking shirtwaist. She looks terrific. Hear the DOORBELL.

JUDITH
(yelling)
Just a minute!

She glances in the mirror, then decides to stick a ribbon in her hair. She now looks terrific and cute as a button. She runs for the stairs.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Hear the DOOR BELL again. Judith comes down the stairs.

JUDITH
I'm coming!

She opens the door. Sharpe is standing there.

JUDITH
(sounding surprised)
Well, hello.

Sharpe looks around.

SHARPE
I thought you were expecting me.

JUDITH
(flustered)
I am. I thought it was going to be someone else. Jehovah's Witnesses.

SHARPE
Most people don't greet them so effusively.

JUDITH
I like them. We have meaningful dialogues.

SHARPE
Swell. Now, do you want to ask me in? I'm freezing my buns off.

JUDITH
Yeah. Sure. Come in.

He steps inside. He brushes by her very closely. She feels the proximity and it makes her nervous. Sharpe smiles at her. He knows exactly what he's doing.

INT. DINING ROOM - CLOSE ON JUDITH - DAY

She's looking through eight or nine Polaroids. She gives a little shudder.

SHARPE
I'm sorry. I guess this stuff is a little raw --

JUDITH
Nah. I've seen racier stuff on late-night cable. But this is different, you know? These aren't porno actors making a living. They could be women I know. And here's Judith Singer staring at them on her dining room table.

SHARPE
Confucius say, 'Lady who lie down with rat get up with plague.' Or something like that.
(a beat)
Recognize anybody?

JUDITH
I don't think so.
(frustrated)
Wait -- no. The hands are too big.
(then)
These three are obviously the same person. But I don't know who.

SHARPE
(looking over her shoulder)
I can't say she looks exploited.

JUDITH
Not with that big smile on her face.

She flips to another picture, frowns.

JUDITH
Hand me the magnifying glass.

Nearby is a glass. Sharpe slides it over. Judith peers through it.

JUDITH
There's something about this one --

She peers even harder, can't put it together.

JUDITH
I should know. But I just don't.
I'm really sorry.

She sits back in frustration.

JUDITH
I'm not any use to you at all.

SHARPE
Don't feel bad. We tried.

He gathers up the pictures.

JUDITH
Some detective I am.

SHARPE
You're a wonderful detective.

And he leans forward and kisses her on the forehead. Before the startled Judith can say a word, Sharpe's on his feet. He squeezes her shoulder on the way past and goes out without another word.

EXT. LONG ISLAND SOUND - LONG SHOT - DAY

In the foreground is Mary Alice Mahoney, sitting on the beach, looking forlorn. In the b.g., see the back of her house. Pool and patio visible. FAINTLY hear a PHONE.

INT. JUDITH'S KITCHEN - JUDITH

waits for a FEW RINGS. She's about to hang up, then:

JUDITH
(into the phone)
Hello! It's Judith.

EXT. POOL - MARY ALICE

INTERCUT WITH Judith.

MARY ALICE
(small, weary voice)
Oh, yes. Hello.

JUDITH
(concerned)
Mary Alice? Are you all right?

MARY ALICE
Why do you ask?

JUDITH
You sound so strange -- kind of far away.

MARY ALICE
I was watching the ocean. What did you want?

JUDITH
I saw the pictures the police have -- don't ask me how I got to see them, just take my word for it. And there aren't any of you. Good news, huh?

MARY ALICE
Yes, it is. Thank you very much.

JUDITH
(puzzled)
You're welcome. Are you sure you're all right?

MARY ALICE
Yes. I'm just very much into myself. One of those moments when you get very near to those things that used to be your dreams.

JUDITH
(not having a clue)
Yes. Sure. Mary Alice? Did you ever call Clay Katz?

MARY ALICE
No, I never did. Well, thank you for the information.

And she hangs up. Judith says "hello" a couple of times, then -- very puzzled -- puts the phone down.

EXT. '21' (NEW YORK CITY) - NIGHT

TO ESTABLISH. We hear:

BOB'S VOICE
Of course all of us know there isn't a doggone thing wrong with a Japanese firm owning banks in this country --

INT. '21' - NIGHT

At a table for four are Bob and Judith with a Japanese couple. TOSHIO is forty-five and very smooth. KIMIKO is pretty and terribly pleasant, but knows almost no English. Judith looks terrific, but the evening's been rough sledding for her.

TOSHIO
Yes. But. We are perceived as over-aggressive capitalists.

BOB
Well, I've had a couple of my bright young folks make up a presentation for you. I think you'll like some of our solutions to your image problem.

TOSHIO
(toasting)
I look forward to seeing it.

Bob beams over at Judith. The business talk seems to be over for the moment.

JUDITH
(to Kimiko; loudly)
How does New York compare to Tokyo?

BOB
(side of his mouth)
She's not deaf, darling.

Toshio translates into Japanese for her. Kimiko giggles, gives it a try.

KIMIKO
New York... big. Tokyo... more big.

JUDITH
(a good scout)
Gee. That's interesting.
(going for it again)
We thought we would be with you and your son tonight. You... and ... your son.

KIMIKO
Ah, so. Son in -- Excuse me.
(whips out a dictionary as they all wait)
Son in... hospital.

JUDITH
Oh, I'm sorry. I hope it isn't anything serious.

Kimiko gives up, giggles at Toshio, who smiles at her.

TOSHIO
Emergency operation. He had his appendix out.

CLOSE ON JUDITH

as this registers. Her eyes grow wide. ANGLE WIDENS.

BOB
He's all right now, isn't he?

TOSHIO
Fine. Who needs an appendix?

As Bob laughs, Judith adds two and two. She gives out a whoop.

JUDITH
I did it! I got it!

BOB
Judith! What is it?

She's on her feet, grabbing her purse.

JUDITH
(beside herself)
Excuse me.
(over her shoulder)
Sorry! I'll be back!

ANGLE TOWARD FRONT OF RESTAURANT

BRINGING Judith FROM the table to f.g., where there's a pay phone. She fumbles for change. In the b.g., Bob peers across at her. She finds a dime, dials 'Operator.'

JUDITH
(breathless)
Operator? Would you connect me with Nassau County Information, please?

AT THE TABLE

Toshio and Kimiko seem puzzled. Bob's annoyed. We see Judith in the b.g., dialing the phone.

BOB
Excuse me. I want to see if anything's wrong.

He stands. Toshio stands and bows. Bob bows back, then walks over to the phone.

ANGLE ON JUDITH

as Bob walks INTO the PICTURE.

BOB
Judith, what's going on?

JUDITH
Oh, Bob, you're gonna shoot me --
(into the phone)
Hello!

INT. SHARPE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

INTERCUT WITH Judith. A no-frills deal -- metal everything. Sharpe stands by the desk, phone to his ear, eating a sandwich.

SHARPE
Judith! What's up?

JUDITH
Brenda Keyes!

SHARPE
What about her?

JUDITH
The one I thought I knew, but didn't!

SHARPE
(bowled over)
What??

JUDITH
Two scars. You can just see them in the picture. I didn't make the connection, but she's got 'em -- an appendix and something else.

BOB
(wildly)
Are you back screwing around with that damned murder again? Are you?

JUDITH
Yes!
(into the phone)
I'm sorry. Just a second.
(back to Bob)
I just solved the damned murder!

BOB
I think I'm losing my mind!

SHARPE
(frustrated)
Will you get back on the phone?

JUDITH
Bob! Everybody's staring at us. Go back and entertain Pink Lady.

BOB
Toshio and Kimiko! And that's just the kind of prejudice they're up against!

He stalks back to the table.

JUDITH
(into the phone)
Here it is. Bruce was a classic Don Juan type, only putting the make on the wives of very successful men, right?

SHARPE
I'm way ahead of you.

JUDITH
Shut up. I'm gonna tell it. Bruce never blackmailed anybody and never intended to, but when Skipper decided to inform on him to the Grand Jury, Bruce put the heavy moves on Brenda, who, God knows, had to be vulnerable to his smarmy line, and then he showed Skipper the pictures. He didn't want money -- he was blackmailing Skipper to keep his mouth shut. So Skipper did it. He murdered Bruce. What do you think?

SHARPE
I think you're a very great woman.
(MORE)

SHARPE (CONT'D)
But I'm not sure it's quite as simple as that.

JUDITH
(seeing it clearly)
Of course! Don't tell me! The blackmail bit had to be a standoff. Bruce could have ruined Skipper, but Skipper would have ruined Bruce at the same time. Look what Bruce was up to. In the second place, Skipper doesn't even seem to like Brenda. Would he kill Bruce over her? Why am I talking myself out of this?

SHARPE
I don't care. Keep free-associating. As long as I can follow it, I love it.

JUDITH
Okay. Then there's gotta be something besides just the pictures that would make a wimp like Skipper Keyes kill a stud like Bruce Fleckstein. Assuming he did it. Which I'm now assuming again.

SHARPE
You are too much.

JUDITH
Nelson? I'm going to talk to Brenda again. I'll tell her I know everything and see what she says.

SHARPE
I don't suppose you'd consider letting the police do that.

JUDITH
Not for a second.

SHARPE
Could I say one thing?

JUDITH
What?

SHARPE
I think you're marvelous.

JUDITH
(pleased)
Thank you.

SHARPE
I was mentally measuring you today.

JUDITH
You were what?

SHARPE
I decided you'd fit very nicely in my arms. That's important when you're considering having an affair.

JUDITH
Can _I_ say one thing?

SHARPE
What?

JUDITH
Don't ever say that again.

SHARPE
I'll think it. See you tomorrow.

JUDITH
You will?

SHARPE
You don't think I'm letting you do this unprotected, do you? We'll be right outside the whole time. Good niiiight.

And he clicks off. Flustered by Sharpe, excited by her discoveries, Judith hangs up. But she looks into the restaurant, and there's Bob.

AT TABLE

Toshio and Kimiko seem confused. Bob's trying to keep from being obviously upset. Judith now strides up to the table and, before Bob can say anything:

JUDITH
You know those science fiction movies where they have an Air Force major in charge of saving the world from the giant beetles and there's this idiotic professor and some woman everybody calls 'the girl'? Well, they all say, 'You stay here, we don't want you to get hurt,' and she says, 'All right, men know best,' and you know what always happens?
(MORE)

JUDITH (CONT'D)
They leave her where it's supposed to be safe and some of the beetles show up and almost get her and the men have to come back and save her because she's a helpless wimp and if she'd gone with the guys in the first place and acted like a mensch instead of a girl... well... that's why I'm solving this case.

She sits down. Bob just looks at her. Toshio doesn't understand Occidental women, anyway, and Kimiko hasn't understood a bloody word.

INT. KEYES' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Brenda's bombed, crying. She works on yet another scotch. Judith's on the sofa, listening.

BRENDA
(unsteadily)
It happened a couple of weeks before he was killed. He asked me out to lunch and told me he'd been worshipping me from afar for years and the only reason he'd stayed married to Norma was because she was Skipper's sister and that way he'd be close to me.

JUDITH
(gently)
And you were flattered, huh.

BRENDA
Sure. I never had a real relationship with anybody. The sex was wild. I'd never done anything kinky, so it was a real turn-on. But the other part of being with Bruce was what made it so different. He confided things to me. You know. He was so... vulnerable --

And Judith blinks at that notion.

BRENDA
It made me open up and tell him private things that I'd never told anybody ever before. It was really beautiful, Judith.

Brenda drains her scotch, gets up very unsteadily and goes to mix a fresh one.

BRENDA
(reeling)
Scotch sure mellows you out. I've been real mellow lately.
(turning to Judith; confused)
Is all this going to be in your PhD thesis?

JUDITH
Uh-uh. We're just talking as friends.

BRENDA
Are we friends?

JUDITH
Sure. If you want us to be.

BRENDA
I do.

JUDITH
Then we are. Tell me some more things, Brenda.

Brenda knocks off the scotch she's just poured, pours another, turns to Judith, a little uncertain.

JUDITH
Tell me the kind of things you and Bruce confided in each other.

BRENDA
Private things. Very, very private.
(a pause as Judith lets her think)
He told me about his dream to have free dental clinics for poor children everywhere --

Judith takes that in.

BRENDA
-- And he told me about his fantasies -- they were all about... like saving beautiful women from fires and things and then making love to them. He told me how cold Norma was and how she didn't understand his needs... and I told him how bad I needed him because Skipper and I hadn't... well, you know.

JUDITH
(gently)
You and Skipper don't ever --

BRENDA

He had a kind of circulatory problem a few years ago.

JUDITH

And it made him impotent?

BRENDA

Worse. Much worse. It's... gone.

Judith is utterly shocked by this.

JUDITH

Oh my God, Brenda...

(a beat)

And you told that to Bruce?

BRENDA

Yes. We confided so much... but afterwards I was kind of sorry I told him.

JUDITH

Yeah. I get the feeling Bruce was the kind of guy who'd let another guy know he knew... a thing like that.

BRENDA

(starting to cry)

Poor Skipper. Poor Bruce. Poor Brenda.

We MOVE INTO a TIGHT SHOT ON her as she pours the rest of the bottle of scotch into her glass. There must be half a pint in it now and she holds it up and toasts Judith...

BRENDA

Poor world...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

FADE IN:

EXT. SINGERS' HOUSE - DAY

To ESTABLISH. Sharpe's car is out front. Hear:

JUDITH'S VOICE
(palpably hurt)
Why aren't you going to arrest
Skipper Keyes? I don't understand.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sharpe's having coffee. Judith stands over him.

SHARPE
I'll explain. What we have here
is a theoretical case.

JUDITH
We *know* he did it!
(seeing the truth
now)
Sure. 'Ladies and gentlemen of
the jury, you must send this man
to prison because Lieutenant
Sharpe and Mrs. Singer know he
did it.'

SHARPE
You just said it. I need a *real*
case. One. I need to put him at
the scene.

JUDITH
Easy. Just show his picture to
everybody within a mile of the
Medical Plaza.

SHARPE
Exactly what I *will* do. Two. I
need physical evidence. Somewhere
there's a stack of Polaroids he
took out of Fleckstein's office.
If I arrest him now, he'll be out
on a habeas corpus and you can bet
those pictures'll be ashes in ten
minutes.

JUDITH
(depressed)
I see what you mean.

SHARPE

At least I know who to build a case against now. You did that for me. I don't know how I can ever thank you.

(smiles)

Well, actually, there is a way I could thank you.

JUDITH

(embarrassed)

Go on. Take a hike, will you?

SHARPE

(softly)

I'm going to miss you.

And before Judith can speak, Sharpe walks out the door without a backward glance.

DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family's around the table. The kids are both aware of tension in the air. They eat in silence, looking away.

KITCHEN - JUDITH

starts up the dishwasher. She walks over to the doorway, looks into the living room.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - BOB

We can hear the TV from the den. Bob's in his chair, drinking coffee, reading the paper.

JUDITH

Is this going to be it from now on? The silent treatment?

Bob puts the paper down and looks at her for a moment.

JUDITH

They gave my gold watch and retired me.

(a beat)

Would you like to hear whodunit?

BOB

(a smile)

Was it the same party who stabbed our refrigerator?

JUDITH
(grateful for the smile)
I'm not positive about the refrigerator, but it was Skipper Keyes who stabbed Bruce Fleckstein.

BOB
The brother-in-law?

JUDITH
Yup.

BOB
You really figured it out?

JUDITH
Yup. Listen, I know you have a delicate attention span, but would you like to hear how I did it?

BOB
Are you really finished with it? Forever? Cross your heart?

JUDITH
And hope to die.

The PHONE RINGS.

JUDITH
I wasn't before, I admit --

The PHONE RINGS AGAIN. Judith moves for the kitchen.

JUDITH
(calling back)
But I am now. Scout's honor.

INT. KITCHEN

as Judith picks up the telephone.

JUIDTH
(into the phone)
Hello...
(she goes pale)
Hello.
(voice shaking)
I'm fine. How are you?

INT. KEYES' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

INTERCUT WITH Judith. Skipper Keyes is on the phone.

SKIPPER
I'm saving you a nickel.

JUDITH
You are?

SKIPPER
Brenda was saying you stopped by again today. She said you had some real nice girl-talk.

JUDITH
She said that, huh?

SKIPPER
Uh-huh. Y'know, Judy -- it seems to me you've gotten a little far afield in your research.

JUDITH
(really nervous)
Well, sometimes one line of research leads you into other areas --

SKIPPER
And to interesting conclusions, I'll bet.

JUDITH
Sometimes.

SKIPPER
You want to hear my thinking on all this?

JUDITH
Sure.

SKIPPER
I think _you_ think you've pinned down who killed my late brother-in-law.

JUDITH
Oh, really? _Have_ I pinned it down?

SKIPPER
Let's skip all this cute sparring. I'm willing to pay.

Judith's jaw drops. She nearly fumbles the phone.

JUDITH
(trying to be cool)
I see. Fine. Okay. Great. That's very sensible of you.

SKIPPER
You know where Jimmy's Red Lantern is?

JUDITH
No. Wait. Yes.

SKIPPER
Meet me there at eleven. We can talk about it.

JUDITH
Eleven tonight? Oh, boy. I don't know if I can --

SKIPPER
Trouble getting out of the house? Should my mother send your mother a note?

JUDITH
Nothing like that, I --

SKIPPER
See you at eleven.

CLOSE ON SKIPPER

as he hangs up the phone. CAMERA does a SLOW PAN OFF him and ONTO Brenda. She's sitting rigidly in a wing-back chair. Her mouth is swollen and her eyes are both black and puffy. She's evidently been beaten silly.

JUDITH

stands by her phone, hands shaking. She goes to the entrance to the living room, looks in at Bob, who's still reading the paper.

BOB
Who was that?

JUDITH
Oh, just the killer. He thinks I want to blackmail him, so he wants to meet me alone. He's either going to pay me off or murder me. You want a cup of coffee?

SINGER KITCHEN - CLOSE ON JUDITH'S BACK

as adhesive tape is being applied to a wire antenna that comes from a battery transmitter at Judith's waist.

JUDITH
This tape itches.

PULL BACK. A pretty black uniformed policewoman, OFFICER JACKSON, is fitting the radio mike.

ANOTHER ANGLE - AT THE KITCHEN TABLE - SHARPE

sits. A handy-talkie is beside him. Checks his watch.

SHARPE
You're just nervous.

JUDITH
Of course I'm nervous! I'm a middle-class Jewish housewife, not some crazed guerrilla with a grenade between my teeth.
(into her chest)
Testing, testing --

JACKSON
You aren't gonna do that when you sit down with the suspect, are you, sugar?

JUDITH
Sure. Then I'll ask him for a voice level.

SHARPE
All right, girls. Now listen. If he makes any threatening gestures, or if you feel anything at all is off-base, call him Mr. Keyes instead of Skipper and we'll be on him in five seconds. You got that?

JUDITH
I got it. Ten-four.

DOORWAY - BOB

a furious expression on his face. He fumes.

SHARPE
Were you able to reach the Chief, Mr. Singer?

BOB
(tight-lipped)
Yes.

SHARPE
What did he say?

BOB
He said as long as she signed a release, doing this is up to her.

SHARPE
Did he also say I'd cleared it with him?

BOB
Yes.
(with cold fury)
There's nothing I can say to stop you?

JUDITH
No.

And Bob stalks out of the room. Sharpe gets up.

SHARPE
I'm going out and get on the floor of your car. Take a minute to go to the bathroom. We should leave at ten of eleven.

He goes out the back door.

LIVING ROOM - BOB

sits silently, jaws working, angry, frustrated. Judith comes down the stairs. She starts off, then decides to face it.

JUDITH
You really don't understand, do you?

BOB
I understand that our lives are disrupted. I understand that you're endangering yourself for ... cheap thrills, I don't know. And I don't think things are ever going to be the same again.

JUDITH
What you've gotta try to understand is that the way things were wasn't so wonderful me.

BOB
You never complained.

JUDITH
I didn't realize it. Look. I've given this a lot of thought. Y'see ... first you're a little child, then a growing child and then a grown child. With me so far? Then you're supposed to be a young person -- grown up but not grown up. Then -- boy, this is starting to confuse me -- then you're a married woman with kids and after that you've got being-with-your-husband-after-the-children-have-moved-away-till-you're-both-dead-and-gone.
(as Bob tries to fathom this)
Well, I went right from being a grown child to being a married woman with babies and even though I went to college, we got married when we were sophomores, for heaven's sake, and even though I've been busting my tail on this meaningless doctorate for God know how many years ... the thing is... I want to find out what the hell it was I was gonna be when I grew up. Can you understand that?

BOB
Are you telling me that playing amateur detective is somehow a realization of your lost potential? That what you were supposed to be when you grew up was a policeman? Why not a fireman? How about a cowboy?

JUDITH
Bob, what I'm saying is that for the first time in as long as I can remember, I'm being challenged -- and I'm talking about my mind and my wits. And I'm having so much fun I can't even begin to tell you. This isn't going very well, is it?

BOB
Look. You're slipping away from me here! What can I do? Tell me, will you?

JUDITH
I don't know. I really don't.

Hear a CAR HORN, INSISTENT.

JUDITH
I've gotta go.

A long look between them -- an unhappy one -- and then Judith runs out of the house.

INT. JUDITH'S CAR - MOVING SHOT

Judith's at the wheel. We can see Sharpe, lying down in the back seat out of sight.

SHARPE
(into his handy-talkie)
Raven One to all units. How do you read me?

A VOICE (FILTERED)
Loud and clear, Lieutenant. Unit One in place in the parking lot.

ANOTHER VOICE (FILTERED)
Units Two and Three in place inside the restaurant.

SHARPE
(into the handy-talkie)
Ten-four. Our ETA is five minutes.

A silence. Judith's looking scared.

JUDITH
Nelson, if anything happens --

SHARPE
Relax. I'll see that your kids are well taken care of. I'll even find somebody nice for your husband.

JUDITH
That's not funny.

SHARPE
Yes, it is. You're great and everything's gonna be all right. Drive.

EXT. JIMMY'S RED LANTERN INN

Plenty of cars. People coming and going. Nice suburban steak and seafood place. Judith's station wagon pulls into the lot, slips into a parking space.

INT. CAR

as Judith starts to get out.

SHARPE
I'll wait 'til you're inside and I get the signal that you're talking to him. Break a leg.

JUDITH
You, too.

She gets out.

EXT. RESTAURANT

BRINGING Judith OUT of her car. TRACK her as she walks rapidly across the parking lot. Suddenly, hear: SCREECHING of TIRES. Judith jumps.

ANOTHER ANGLE - A YELLOW CORD

has just made the turn into the parking lot on two wheels. It pulls up and brakes, nearly lunching Judith out. HORN SOUNDS.

CLOSE ON THE CORD - SKIPPER KEYES

is at the wheel, grinning. He leans over, rolls down the passenger window.

SKIPPER
Didn't your mother ever tell you to look both ways? I decided I don't like this place after all. You know where the Purple Tiger is?

JUDITH
Yes.

SKIPPER
Okey-doke.

And he PEELS OUT onto the main highway and is gone.

SHARPE

is out of the car like a shot, runs over to Judith.

SHARPE
(into his handy-talkie)
Raven One to all units. Get out here on the double.

He sees Judith looking up at him with a very scared look on her face. He puts his arms around her.

SHARPE
You can just go home, y'know. Say the word. I'll still love you.

JUDITH
Not on your life.

He hugs her tightly, then lets go as:

FROM THE RESTAURANT ENTRANCE

Four plainclothes OFFICERS, two of them female, come running out. Three more OFFICERS converge from a van in the parking lot.

SHARPE
Get over to the Purple Tiger. Same deal, inside and out. We'll give you five minutes.

The Cops all move out smartly for various cars.

TWO SHOT - JUDITH AND SHARPE

Judith is a little shaken, but recovered. They exchange a look that expresses the pure thrill of comradery. And now Sharpe -- unable to resist -- takes Judith in his arms and kisses her. She's startled, but after a second, she kisses him back.

SUBURBAN ROAD - LONG SHOT - NIGHT

The station wagon moves along. All we can see is Judith at the wheel.

INT. CAR - MOVING SHOT

Driving in silence for a moment, then:

JUDITH
(worried)
Listen... about that kiss --

SHARPE
Yes?

COP'S VOICE (FILTERED)
(urgently)
Raven One, this is Raven Two. How do you read me?

SHARPE
(to Judith)
Hold that thought.
(into handy-talkie)
Loud and clear, Raven Two.

COP (FILTERED)
Something's wrong, Lieutenant. The Purple Tiger is closed!

SHARPE
(into handy-talkie)
Stay loose. We're almost there.

JUDITH
What's he talking about? It's closed??

Sharpe edges up so he can see out past Judith.

SHARPE
Go slow. It's in this block.

THE STREET - ANGLE PAST JUDITH - MOVING SHOT

as slowly the Purple Tiger moves INTO VIEW. And it is closed. The parking lot appears empty.

SHARPE
Pull over.

Judith slows. As they're abreast of the restaurant, we can see the Cord all alone in the parking lot.

JUDITH
Look! There he is!

She stops. We can just make out, way in the distance, Skipper behind the wheel of the Cord, waiting.

SHARPE
Let's go home.

JUDITH
Wait a minute. He must have seen me. If I don't go over there, he might decide I'm working with the police.

SHARPE
True. And if you do go over there, he'll decide he was right about you blackmailing him and he might kill you.

JUDITH
I don't think so.

SHARPE
Well, this isn't a crowded restaurant.
I'm not willing to take the chance.

JUDITH
You're not driving.

And she steps on the gas. Sharpe's thrown back.

SHARPE
Dammit! Are you crazy?

LONG SHOT

as Judith pulls across the traffic and drives into the parking lot.

SHARPE'S VOICE (FILTERED)
All units! Get as close as you can!

ANGLE - IN THE PARKING LOT PAST THE CORD

as Judith pulls up and stops twenty feet away. She gives Skipper a little wave. She gets out of her car, takes a deep breath, stands there a moment.

INSIDE THE STATION WAGON - SHARPE

draws his pistol, edges up, tries to see out.

AROUND THE CORNER OF THE RESTAURANT

a couple of the Cops edge along as far as the corner, peek around, staying out of sight.

NEIGHBORING BUILDING

The rest of Sharpe's troops edge along to give themselves a view of Skipper.

JUDITH

now starts to walk toward the Cord. She reaches it, leans down.

JUDITH
(trying to be chipper)
You picked a great place. It's
closed. I guess you noticed, huh.
(a beat)
Hey.

She taps on the window.

CLOSE ON SKIPPER

His head falls forward and to the side as the seat belt catches him. His face mashes against the glass. His eyes are rolled back in his head and there is what appears to be a bullethole in the center of his forehead. Judith screams bloody murder.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT SIX

ACT SEVEN

FADE IN:

EXT. NASSAU COUNTY POLICE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

To ESTABLISH. Two police squad cars pull up quickly. Two Cops get out of each one. One of the Cops, a SERGEANT, carries a plastic trash bag with something large in it.

UPSTAIRS - DETECTIVE SQUADROOM - NIGHT

Bringing the four Cops through the door. There is considerable activity for one a.m. DETECTIVES on the phone, a kid delivering sandwiches, etc.

SERGEANT
Where's Sharpe?

DETECTIVE
Inside. What've you got?

SERGEANT
The Porno Squad struck gold.

He takes an antique wood box out of the plastic bag. Sets it on the desk. A crowd gathers.

DETECTIVE
Let's see, Charlie. Open it up.

SERGEANT
You horny toads get away from that.
It's for Sharpe's eyes only.

DETECTIVE
I'll get him.

A NEW ANGLE - THROUGH THE GLASS OF SHARPE'S OFFICE

as the Detective bangs on a door that says INTERROGATION on it. CAMERA MOVES to include Judith. She sits in a metal chair, craning to see what's going on. In the b.g., Sharpe comes out, haggard-looking. Behind him, in the Interrogation Room, we can see, at a table, Brenda Keyes, beat-up and distraught.

BACK OUT IN THE SQUAD ROOM

Sharpe stands by the antique box.

SERGEANT
It was on the top shelf of a closet
out in his garage.

SHARPE
Good work. Lock it up.

A chorus of protest from the Cops.

SHARPE
Baily...

Another plainclothes cop ambles out of the Interrogation Room. An older guy. BAILY.

SHARPE
(hands over his face
wearily)
Thank Mrs. Keyes for absolutely
zilch and take her home.

Baily ambles back inside. Sharpe moves for his office.

INT. SHARPE'S OFFICE

He ambles in, sits wearily, rubs his eyes, looks over at Judith and smiles at her.

SHARPE
Now. Where were we when we were
so rudely interrupted?

JUDITH
Huh?

SHARPE
You said 'Nelson... about that
kiss --'

JUDITH
(after a beat)
Are you married?

SHARPE
I used to be. A nice lady who
couldn't take being a cop's wife.

JUDITH
Do you do this a lot? Mess around
with itchy housewives you meet?

SHARPE
(flaring a little)
Is that what you think I'm doing?
Messing around? Listen to me.
(MORE)

SHARPE (CONT'D)
Believe this or not. I am seriously attracted to you and I wouldn't have laid a finger on you if I didn't think it was mutual or if you looked like you had a really happy marriage going for you.
(this jars Judith)
You're a terrific woman, Judith. I can't believe your husband really knows that and I'm not sure you even know it. But you are. Now look at my blackboard and talk to me about the case before I grab you right here in the office.

Judith looks at him. Gratitute, attraction, confusion. She shakes it off and looks up at the wall.

CLOSE ON A BLACKBOARD

In Sharpe's scrawl, we see:

Judith squints at it intently.

JUDITH
Who would know Skipper killed Bruce?

SHARPE
Maybe he told somebody.

JUDITH
Not Brenda. She didn't know a thing.

SHARPE
Tell me about it. I just questioned her for an hour. It was like interrogating Jell-O. Maybe he told Norma.

JUDITH
And she killed her own brother for killing her husband? A nice Jewish lady with a Sicilian vengeance syndrome? Spooky.

SHARPE
Well, Norma's our only bet right now. And she's disappeared off the surface of the earth.
(a beat)
Do you know you're beautiful when you're exhausted?

A nice smile between them.

EXT. JUDITH'S HEALTH CLUB - DAY

To ESTABLISH. We hear: SWITCHED-ON WHATEVER. And:

AEROBICS INSTRUCTOR'S VOICE
Stretch, two, three, four. Touch, two, three, four --

INT. HEALTH CLUB

The usual group of sweaty ladies. FEATURE Judith. She's _dying_. Gives it up, waves half-heartedly at the Instructor and, right in the middle of it, stumbles away, pooped.

THE SAUNA ROOM

Judith, wrapped in towels, gives it some thought, says the hell with it and goes into the sauna.

INT. SAUNA

It's empty. Judith spreads a couple more towels, lies down and closes her eyes.

OUTSIDE THE SAUNA AGAIN - A WOMAN'S HANDS

She opens the sauna door. We see only towel-wrapped hips as the woman enters, brings the door carefully to.

INSIDE - THE WOMAN'S HANDS

She jams the door tightly shut.

CLOSE ON JUDITH

sweating now. She senses somebody there and opens one eye. Both eyes open wide and she squawks in fear.

HER POV - NORMA FLECKSTEIN

staring down at her with a contemptuous smirk.

JUDITH
(attacking)
Oh, good grief. It's you. You did it, didn't you? You killed him. And now you think you're going to kill me. Well, you can't have a gun under that towel and if you think you can kill me with your bare hands --

NORMA
Shut _up_, you twit! I'm not going to kill you.

JUDITH
You aren't?

NORMA
No. I want to talk to you.

JUDITH
You're missing.

NORMA
I know that. Thank you very much. Now if you'll just be quiet for ten seconds, I have something to tell you. But before I do, you have to give me your word you'll never tell the police who told you.

JUDITH
(all innocence)
Why would I tell the police anything?

NORMA
Please. I'm a tad brighter than Brenda and a whole _lot_ brighter than my brother. _He_ convinced himself you were blackmailing him. _I_ said you were trying to solve the case. I was right, wasn't I?

JUDITH
He _told_ you about me?

NORMA
He told me everything.

JUDITH
_Every_thing?

NORMA
It's an all-inclusive word. Can we get on with this?

JUDITH
You knew he killed your husband?

NORMA
Bruce was a cockroach. He deserved it all the way.
(as Judith looks stunned)
Now, are you interested in knowing who killed my brother or aren't you?

JUDITH
Yes! Tell me! Who was it?

NORMA
Somebody Bruce took pictures of.

JUDITH
What??

NORMA
When Skipper dispatched Bruce to that great spit-sink in the sky, he took all of Bruce's pictures with him, assuming he was getting Brenda's pictures in the lot. So... there he sat, my sweet little brother -- a sexual neuter, a murderer, a pauper and a nightcrawler. With few if any prospects and no money, _but_... he did have a pile of nasty pictures of rich men's wives. So he picked one of them to blackmail. He never told me who. But whoever it was killed him. At least that's _my_ theory. You can sort it all out from there.

She opens the door.

JUDITH
Norma... I want to say I'm sorry about everything. Bruce and Skipper, I mean.

NORMA
(softening)
You can't pick your own brother, of course, but I could sure as hell have picked a better husband, couldn't I?

And she's gone.

INT. SHARPE'S OFFICE - DAY

Sharpe's at his desk, doing paperwork. We see, through the glass, Judith and Nancy enter. Sharpe waves.

CLOSE ON JUDITH

as she walks straight to Sharpe's blackboard, writes the word "BLACKMAILEE" under the list of suspects.

JUDITH
Think about it. There was Skipper Keyes -- a sexual neuter, a murderer, a pauper and a nightcrawler. He's got all of Bruce's pictures -- all wives of guys with money, remember? So he picks one to blackmail. Only whichever one it was either had too much to lose or couldn't pay or... all of the above.

SHARPE
(impressed)
I'm damned if it doesn't make sense.
(nodding to Nancy)
Your apprentice?

JUDITH
My ward. If she's nice to me, she gets to drive the Batmobile. Nancy Miller, Nelson Sharpe.

SHARPE
(shaking hands)
How do you do?

NANCY
Judith was right. You are cute and sexy.

SHARPE
(pleased)
Why, thank you.

JUDITH
I'll get you for that, Nancy.
(to Sharpe)
You. Sexy. Trot out that box of snappy poses you got from Skipper's garage. Between Benedict Arnold and me, we ought to be able to figure out who some of them are.

SHARPE
(to Nancy)
You see why I'm mad about the girl?

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

Nancy and Judith are at a long table. In front of them, there are ten piles of Polaroids, seven of the stacks separate from the other three.

JUDITH
You're terrific. You got six of the seven we identified!

NANCY
(idly picking one up)
Mary Alice doesn't look like she's enjoying it much, does she?

JUDITH
(a brainstorm)
Nancy... think about this for a minute. Every one of these women knew they'd had their pictures taken and they knew Bruce had kept them, right? So... if somebody calls you up and says I have Bruce Fleckstein's pictures and I'm hereby blackmailing you --

NANCY
You know you're talking to Bruce's murderer! Right!
(a beat)
So what?

JUDITH
So it means that Skipper was taking a terrific calculated risk! He's got to be careful to blackmail somebody who wants to protect herself and her husband in the worst way -- more than she wants to turn in a murderer. Now --
(MORE)

JUDITH (CONT'D)
(back to the photos)
Out of all these women, whose husband would have the most to lose?

They both look at the stacks of pictures, then get the idea at the same time. Judith picks up a picture.

JUDITH
(in dread)
Aw, no...

Nancy looks at the picture, shakes her head.

NANCY
My, my. I'm afraid it all fits. Keith is up for a Cabinet post --

JUDITH
And Mary Alice couldn't get her hands on ten dollars if her life depended on it.

NANCY
You know what you've done, don't you, you smart little dickens?

JUDITH
Yeah. I've put my finger on yet another murderer without there being a shred of evidence.
(suddenly stricken)
Nancy... she's our friend.

NANCY
Sweetie, here's a hypothetical situation for you. Mary Alice Mahoney needs taxi fare. Some gypsies say give us Judith Singer and we'll give you eight dollars and fifty cents. What does Mary Alice Mahoney do?

JUDITH
(it's the truth)
She sells me.

EXT. MARY ALICE'S SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Mary Alice, looking skeletal in a bikini, suns herself distractedly. Judith sits in the shade.

JUDITH

-- So when Skipper Keyes was killed, the police closed the files on Bruce Fleckstein's murder. There isn't any reason in the world why those pictures should ever come out of the police vault.

(as Mary Alice doesn't answer)

I just thought I ought to put your mind at ease for you.

MARY ALICE

(not opening her eyes)

That's nice.

JUDITH

(probing a little)

So you don't need to worry any more that someone might show the pictures to Keith, or use them to ruin Keith's Cabinet prospects ... or anything like that.

MARY ALICE

No, that's something I don't need to worry about anymore.

(on her feet)

Let's walk on the beach.

Judith frowns as Mary Alice puts on her robe.

INT. POLICE VAN

A police TECHNICIAN and Sharpe both listen through headphones. The tape goes round and round.

TECHNICIAN

The surf'll kill us, Lieutenant.

BACK TO THE POOL

JUDITH

You know what? I don't want to walk in the sand in these shoes.

MARY ALICE

I don't care in the least what you do.

And she walks away. Frustrated, Judith follows.

JUDITH

(muttering at her chest)

Sorry.

THE SURF

is high. The tide's coming in and the waves look treacherous. CAMERA PANS TO PICK UP Mary Alice and Judith. They walk about where we saw Mary Alice earlier. The house is in the b.g. Both women have to shout to be heard over the POUNDING of the WAVES.

MARY ALICE
Did you ever do something that you know is going to ruin your life, on a day when your horoscope says if you do a certain thing you'll ruin your life, but you do it anyway because you're like the moth that flies into the flame?

JUDITH
Well, I've certainly done stupid things --

MARY ALICE
That's how it was with me. The moth and the flame.

IN THE COP VAN

TECHNICIAN
We can forget it, Lieutenant. I can't even hear Mrs. Singer.

Sharpe just tosses his headphones into the air.

BACK ON THE BEACH

as Mary Alice veers toward the surf. She goes in up to her ankles, stands there, looking out to sea. Judith wades in, shoes and all. They stand there for a moment in silence. Judith squints at Mary Alice, whose expression is odd and dreamy.

JUDITH
(taking the plunge)
It must've been a hell of a shock when Skipper called you and said he had the pictures.

MARY ALICE
(not batting an eye)
He wanted money, Judith.

JUDITH
And you couldn't get any, right?

MARY ALICE
That didn't matter.

A wave breaks, almost knocks Mary Alice down. Judith's getting soaked.

JUDITH
(pushing it)
Did you decide to kill him right away?

Mary Alice turns toward Judith, looks at her a long time.

MARY ALICE
You don't understand at all.

JUDITH
Why don't I, Mary Alice?

MARY ALICE
You think I killed that awful little man because he was blackmailing me and I couldn't pay. That's not why I did it, Judith. He killed the only man I ever truly loved and who ever truly loved me. Bruce Fleckstein was the most beautiful man who ever lived.
(starting to break up)
And he's dead, and the man who killed him is dead, and soon I'll be dead.

JUDITH
What are you talking about?

MARY ALICE
(really crying now)
Say good-bye to Nancy. We were like sisters, except that she always hated me. You like me, though, don't you, Judith?

JUDITH
(crying, too)
Sure, I do.

MARY ALICE
You're so lucky. You have intelligence and a happy life.

JUDITH
Hey, come on. Let's go back to the house.
(alarmed)
Mary Alice!

Mary Alice has turned and is striding as fast as she can into the ocean.

JUDITH
(really scared)
Mary Alice!

ANGLE ON MARY ALICE

She dives into a wave just before it breaks and is swimming out to sea with surprising strength. Judith is bowled over by a wave.

JUDITH
(yelling)
Mary Alice! Hey!
(shouting at her microphone)
Somebody get out here! Right now! HELP!

And as she tries to dash into the surf, she's knocked down again.

JUDITH
(screaming)
MARY ALICE! DAMMIT! YOU COME BACK HERE! COME ON! PLEEEEASE!

THE POLICE VAN

Half a block from the house. Sharpe and the Technician are sprinting from it to the house.

ANGLE ON TWO OTHER COP CARS

as Sharpe sprints past, he waves at them to come on. They vault out of the cars, run with him.

IN THE SURF

Judith is trying to swim, but is nearly exhausted. She calls to Mary Alice again.

FURTHER OUT - MARY ALICE

is swimming, oblivious to Judith's SCREAMS.

ANGLE BY THE POOL - THE COPS

led by Sharpe, rush past an agitated maid, vault the little hedge and come running for the water.

ANGLE ON JUDITH

She's floundering and choking. Tries to scream at the Cops, but can only sputter frantically and point. Sharpe comes into the water as far as Judith and holds her out of the water.

TWO OF THE COPS

both young, husky guys, have shucked their shoes and jackets. They race into the surf, hitting the waves with flat dives.

ANGLE ON JUDITH

Exhausted, she leans on Sharpe.

JUDITH
(still screaming)
Mary Alice! Mary Alice!

ANGLE ON THE TWO COPS

swimming. They're out where there are only swells.

AN OVERHEAD SHOT

We see the two Cops. They tread water. Looking frantically around. As far as you can see, there's nothing. We can still hear Judith SCREAMING for Mary Alice.

IN FRONT OF THE MAHONEYS' HOUSE - A LONG SHOT - DAY

A crowd. An ambulance. A truck that says CORONER on the side of it. We see Sharpe, a blanket around his shoulders, trying to comfort a weeping man who must be Keith Mahoney. Keith is led away by some other people. Uniformed cops direct traffic. CAMERA FOLLOWS Sharpe. He comes to Judith's station wagon. She's behind the wheel. Sharpe gets in.

INT. JUDITH'S CAR

She sits, hair plastered wet, a blanket over her shoulders, teeth still chattering.

SHARPE
You okay?

JUDITH
(lip trembling)
Sure. Hunky-dory.

Sharpe puts an arm around her, draws her head to his shoulder and she cries. It's a tender moment. You can tell he wants in the worst way to kiss her. Instead, he sits her back up. She's recovering, wiping her eyes.

JUDITH

Poor Mary Alice. You know who killed her, Nelson? Bruce Fleckstein and Skipper Keyes, sure. But so did everybody who says it's okay to cheat. That nobody gets hurt. And so did all the people who say commitments don't matter.

SHARPE

(quietly)

I hear you.

There's a long look between them.

JUDITH

So... as nice as it would be to fall in love with you, Nelson, I'm going home.

SHARPE

Tell you what.

JUDITH

What?

SHARPE

As nice as it would be for me to fall in love with you... why don't you go home?

JUDITH

Okay.

Sharpe starts to get out of the car.

SHARPE

Judith... you were wonderful.

He closes the door and walks away. Judith watches him for a beat, then starts the car and drives away.

EXT. SINGERS' HOUSE - NIGHT

To ESTABLISH. Hear: DINNER SOUNDS.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Dinner. Bob and Judith eat in silence. The kids, feeling the tension, follow suit. The kids are finishing.

JUDITH
You kids go watch TV.

KATE
Do we have to watch the news?

JUDITH
Naw. Watch 'Happy Days.'

The kids yell Yaaay and run out. Another silence.

JUDITH
Okay. One. We're getting a
housekeeper.

BOB
Okay.

JUDITH
(a little surprised)
No argument?

BOB
Not yet. Go on.

JUDITH
Okay. Two. No more ordering me
to do anything. Ever.

BOB
I order you never to worry about
that again.

JUDITH
(blinking)
Right. Three. Whatever is it I'm
supposed to be, that's what I'm
going to be.

BOB
Okay.

JUDITH
This isn't supposed to be so easy.

BOB
Just a second.

He goes off into the living room, comes right back with a large gift-wrapped package. He puts it in front of Judith, then sits on the chair beside her.

JUDITH
What's this?

BOB
Unwrap it.

Giving him an odd, suspicious look, Judith takes off the ribbon, then tears away the paper.

CLOSE ON THE PACKAGE

It's a kid's detective set. Bob takes the lid off.

BOB
See? It's got a little tiny badge, a plastic gun, some handcuffs --
(lifting them out)
-- suitable for capturing criminals with very small wrists. There's some clue-sorting stuff and a handbook --

JUDITH
Cute, Bob.

BOB
I bought it a couple of weeks ago. At the time, I meant it to be sarcastic, but now... well, I guess I mean it as a blessing.

JUDITH
(melting)
You do?

BOB
Yup. C'mere.

He takes her hand, leads her away.

THE LIVING ROOM

as Bob hauls Judith to the front hall, opens the closet, takes out her coat, throws it over her shoulders, then opens the front door.

BOB
(taking her shoulders)
I decided that if you were really going to be free to love me and be with me, and not run off with the cop with the soulful eyes, you had to be free to do it.

JUDITH
So you open the corral gates and say 'go free, wild horsie'? Is that it?

Now Bob pushes her gently out the front door.

BOB
Go free, wild horsie.

JUDITH
(from outside)
It's the middle of the night!

Bob closes the door. He stands there for awhile. Finally, there's a KNOCK. Bob opens the door. Judith is still standing on the porch.

JUDITH
Can I have my badge?

BOB
You bet.

He goes to the dining room, comes back with the baby badge, hands it to Judith. She pins it on her coat.

JUDITH
I notice you didn't set me free in the daytime with my car keys and any money.

BOB
I may be stupid, but I'm not crazy.

There's a pause. Bob admires the badge.

BOB
You want to come in? We could have some fun.

JUDITH
Yeah?

BOB
Yeah.

JUDITH
I really like the detective kit. Can I keep it?

BOB
It's all yours.

ANGLE FROM OUTSIDE

as Judith goes in the door and into Bob's arms. She closes the door shut behind her. CAMERA PULLS BACK and HOLDS a nice SHOT of the house and the whole neighborhood.

FADE OUT.

THE END